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ESSAYS
ON
POLITICAL AND SOCIAL
SCIENCE,

CONTRIBUTED CHIEFLY TO
THE EDINBURGH REVIEW.

BY WILLIAM R. GREG.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS.
1853.

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ESSAYS
ON
POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

CONTRIBUTED TO VARIOUS REVIEWS.

DR. ARNOLD'S LECTURES ON MODERN HISTORY.*

Few names have been more widely known, and none have been more universally respected, in England, than that of Dr. Arnold. As head master of Rugby school, his sphere of usefulness was extensive, and his reputation deservedly high; while his various theological writings insured him a corresponding estimation in the religious world; and, to say nothing of his valuable edition of Thucydides, his History of Rome, unhappily still a fragment, which was destined to supply a long-felt desideratum in our literature, placed him at once in the very foremost rank among scholars and historians. Unfinished as it is, it will always retain its place as one of the finest historical fragments in our language; and in our humble opinion, enough even now remains to justify a conviction that, had he lived to complete it, it

* From the "Westminster Review."

1. *Dr. Arnold's Sermons on the Christian Course and Character.* 1841.

2. *Introductory Lectures on Modern History.* By Dr. ARNOLD. Oxford: 1842.

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would have stood at the head of our classical literature in that department. It is a work, even in its present form, in which the experience of the past is brought to bear, with singular force and discrimination, upon the exigencies of the present; to solve many of the perplexing problems which are now evolving before our eyes; and to enlighten that dark cloud which, even to the most hopeful and trusting minds, involves much of the future destinies of our country and our kind. More than this we cannot here say of it: that it is a work which cannot fail to be admired by thousands who are neither scholars nor philosophers, but which will be more fully appreciated and more highly estimated by every one, in exact proportion to the extent of his scholarship and the soundness and depth of his philosophical conceptions.

In the year previous to his untimely death, Dr. Arnold, to the great joy of all to whom historical pursuits were dear, was appointed to the professorship of modern history in the University of Oxford. It had not been customary for any lectures to be delivered from that chair; but Dr. Arnold was not a man to make a sinecure of any office which he held. Moreover, his heart was in his subject, and he rejoiced in the opportunity thus afforded him of developing and promulgating his own well-considered conceptions of the moral and political philosophy to be deduced from history. Had he lived to complete his plan, his lectures would have been, we cannot doubt, one of the richest treasuries of wisdom and of learning extant; and he could scarcely have failed to instil some portion of his own lofty and upright principle into the minds of those whom he addressed: but, unhappily for us, it was otherwise decreed: and a brief sketch of what he had intended to do is all that he was permitted to accomplish. The volume of "Introductory Lectures," which he delivered

at the close of 1841, now lies before us; and though marked, perhaps, by a certain want both of terseness of language and concentration of thought (owing, no doubt, to the very short period allowed him for its preparation), it contains much valuable matter, and will furnish food for much careful reflection. We cannot, however, do more than direct the attention of our readers to two or three points of peculiar moment, which he has propounded for our consideration.

In the Inaugural Lecture Dr. Arnold expresses an opinion, with great diffidence indeed, that the elements of modern civilisation are exhausted; that we have now before us, and already brought into operation, all the materials for the future history of our race: in a word, that we are living in the latest epoch of the world's existence. He conceives that the Greek and Roman character was destined to be modified by amalgamation with the Teutonic nations; but—this having been accomplished—that now the world affords no new race which can effect a corresponding modification on the existing elements of the civilised portion of the globe:—

“This leads to a view of modern history, which cannot indeed be confidently relied upon, but which still impresses the mind with an imagination, if not a conviction, of its reality. I mean, that modern history appears to be not only *a* step in advance of ancient history, but *the last* step; it appears to bear marks of the fulness of time, as if there would be no future history beyond it. For the last 1800 years Greece has fed the human intellect; Rome, taught by Greece, and improving upon her teacher, has been the source of law and government and social civilisation; and what neither Greece nor Rome could furnish, the perfection of moral and spiritual truth, has been given by Christianity. The changes which have been wrought have arisen out of the reception of these elements by new races; races endowed with such force of character, that what was old in itself, when exhibited by them seemed to become something new. But races so gifted are, and have been from the beginning

of the world, few in number: the mass of mankind have no such power; they either receive the impression of foreign elements so completely that their own individual character is absorbed, and they take their whole being from without; or, being incapable of taking in higher elements, they dwindle away when brought into the presence of a more powerful life, and become at last extinct altogether. Now looking anxiously round the world for any new races which may receive the seed (so to speak) of our present history into a kindly, yet a vigorous soil, and may reproduce it, the same and yet new, for a future period, we know not where such are to be found. . . . Everywhere the search has been made, and the report received: we have the full amount of earth's resources before us, and they seem inadequate to supply life for a third period of human history."—*Intro. Lecture*, pp. 36—55.

It is assuredly in no spirit of idle paradox or wanton speculation that we venture to differ with this estimable author. We are disposed, however, to think that there does exist a new race not yet brought within the arena of civilisation—a stranger and an outcast from the great commonalty of nations,—known to us, no doubt, and in contact with us, as the barbarians were known at Rome, and in contact with the Roman empire,—but not yet brought to bear upon the European elements of character, under relations which admit of its exercising its proper and allotted influence;—we mean the African race. The suggestion will startle those who have been accustomed to regard the Africans as savages, and will disgust those who have always considered them as beasts of burden; but if they will grant us a few moments of patient attention, we will explain, as briefly as we can, both our opinion and the considerations on which we ground it. We may be in error; in differing from Dr. Arnold it is probable we are; but if we are right in our anticipations, thus much is certain—that the future contains within it greater moral changes than any developed in the past; since

the African race differs far more in all its elements of character from the European, than the Teuton did either from the Roman or the Greek.

In casting our eyes over the various countries of the globe, and considering both the past history and the intrinsic qualities of their peculiar races, we cannot fail to come to the conclusion that several of these have been destined by Providence for early extinction, and were created merely as temporary occupants to fill the void, till pushed out of existence in the fulness of time by other races of more commanding energies and greater capacities, exhibiting a higher development of humanity, and bearing upon them the marks of a more permanent duration. When brought into juxtaposition with European nations, some tribes have sunk from the effect of physical weakness — some from moral inferiority — some from incapacity of acquiring civilisation. The barbarity of the stronger races has, no doubt, in most cases hastened the catastrophe; but from the moment the Caucasian race came into collision with the Red Indians, the tribes of the Caribbean Sea, and the Papuan savages, the ultimate decay and extinction of the latter became a matter of certainty, and a question only of time. The North American Indians, from the hardihood of their habits, and the iron determination of their character, were, of all these, the most competent to make head against what Lord Erskine called “the knavery and strength of civilisation,” and accordingly their resistance has been the most protracted and severe: yet what says M. de Tocqueville (certainly no hasty or prejudiced witness) on this point? After describing the effect of the gradual progress of the whites in driving away the game, and consequently displacing or destroying the Indians who depend upon that game for support, he proceeds: —

Be this, however, as it may, everything points to the one certain conclusion, that whatever other tribes may, in the wise counsels of God, be destined to extinction, the African race is not of the number. It bears the marks of too hardy and enduring a vitality. The physical strength of the Negroes is great, and their activity, under due stimulus, unwearied. When first introduced by the Spaniards into the West Indian Islands, it was found that one African could perform the work of four Indians; the labour under which the unhappy natives sunk by wholesale, they thrived and flourished while performing; and so strong and healthy a race were they considered, that Herrera informs us it was a saying current among the Spaniards, "that, unless a Negro were hanged, he would never die." Even in the present day, we do not find that they are materially, if at all, inferior in physical powers to the generality of Europeans; which is far from being the case with other savage races.* Under favourable circumstances they appear to be a prolific race; nor have we any reason to believe that, when subjected to no peculiar noxious influences, the rate of mortality is higher among them than among many European nations.†

* By means of an instrument called the dynamometer, M. Peron subjected the relative strength of individuals to trial, and found the mean result to be as follows:—

The mean strength of	In the Arms.	In the Loins.
29 Natives of New Holland, &c., was	- 50·7 -	- 10·2
56 „ Timor - - -	- 58·7 -	- 11·6
17 Frenchmen - - -	- 69·2 -	- 15·2
14 Englishmen of New South Wales	- 71·4 -	- 16·3

See "Lawrence on Man," vol. ii. p. 138. "Foreign Quarterly Review," vol. i. p. 181.

† Berard: "Influence de la Civilisation sur la Santé," p. 63. "Foreign Quarterly Review," vol. i. p. 187. It appears that the West Indian Negroes often attain a remarkable longevity. See, on this point, Lawrence, vol. ii. p. 192. The following table shows the rate

"These are great evils; and it must be added that they appear to me to be irremediable. I believe that the Indian nations of North America are doomed to perish; and that whenever the Europeans shall be established on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, that race of men will be no more. The Indians had only the two alternatives of war and civilisation; in other words, they must either have destroyed the Europeans, or become their equals. . . . From whichever side we contemplate the destinies of the Aborigines of North America, their calamities appear to be irremediable: if they continue barbarous they are forced to retire; if they attempt to civilise their manners, the contact of a more civilised community subjects them to oppression and destitution."*

Why, or with what object, Providence should have peopled so many countries with races of men destined to answer only a temporary purpose, and then to be swept away before the advancing tide of human civilisation, it would be useless in us to conjecture. That such, however, is the plan of Providence, we think no doubt can remain. Many races have already been swept away as completely as the Mammoth and the Megatherion, and others are in process of extinction. Which of the many barbarous tribes still existing in the Archipelagos of the two great oceans are destined to destruction, and which are intended to be amalgamated and absorbed into the more civilised and powerful nations of the earth, it is not easy to foresee. Their respective capacities for improvement, combined with the hardihood of their physical constitution, will probably decide their future fate; for we consider that all savage tribes must either be civilised or be extinguished. But if we might hazard a conjecture, we should conceive that the Papuan race is destined to the latter fate, and the New Zealanders, and it may be some among the Polynesian tribes, to the former and happier lot.

* De Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, vol. ii. pp. 295—316.

Be this, however, as it may, everything points to the one certain conclusion, that whatever other tribes may, in the wise counsels of God, be destined to extinction, the African race is not of the number. It bears the marks of too hardy and enduring a vitality. The physical strength of the Negroes is great, and their activity, under due stimulus, unwearied. When first introduced by the Spaniards into the West Indian Islands, it was found that one African could perform the work of four Indians; the labour under which the unhappy natives sunk by wholesale, they thrived and flourished while performing; and so strong and healthy a race were they considered, that Herrera informs us it was a saying current among the Spaniards, "that, unless a Negro were hanged, he would never die." Even in the present day, we do not find that they are materially, if at all, inferior in physical powers to the generality of Europeans; which is far from being the case with other savage races.* Under favourable circumstances they appear to be a prolific race; nor have we any reason to believe that, when subjected to no peculiar noxious influences, the rate of mortality is higher among them than among many European nations.†

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The Africans are equally exempt from the other main distinction which characterises those tribes on which Providence has set the seal of decay and mortality. They are apt to imitate, quick to seize, ambitious to achieve civilisation. Whenever brought into contact with Europeans, they ape their manners, imbibe their tastes, and endeavour to acquire their arts. The imitative disposition and the imitative faculty are both in them particularly strong. They are not unwilling, like the Indian, nor unable, like the Papuan, to learn the lessons, and endure the toils and shackles, of civilised existence. Compared with the Mohawk or the Iroquois, they are as the horse compared with the zebra, as the dog or the elephant compared with the tiger and rhinoceros. In those qualities of acquiring and progressing, which distinguish man from the brutes, they resemble man. In many of those qualities of combination and civilisability which distinguish the Caucasian from the Papuan, they resemble the Caucasian. They have now been for three centuries in contact with Europeans, exposed during that period to the most barbarous treatment and the most destroying and de-

of increase in the United States of the total population (including emigrants) and of the slaves, who, since the abolition of the slave trade, increase only by propagation:—

	Total Population.	Rate of Increase per Cent.	Slaves.	Rate of Increase per Cent.
Census of 1790	3,929,827		697,897	
" 1800	5,305,925	35	893,041	28
" 1810	7,239,814	36	1,191,364	33
" 1820	9,638,131	33	1,538,064	29
" 1830	12,866,920	33	2,009,031	30
" 1840	17,068,666	39	2,487,113	34

Considering, therefore, the gain of the total population by emigration, and the loss to the slave population by manumission, we may conclude that even under the unfavourable circumstances of slavery, the Negroes have increased nearly at the same rate as the most rapidly increasing European nation in the world.

pressing influences ; yet not only has nothing occurred to indicate for them the fate of other unhappy races whom European cruelty or European superiority has trodden out, but they have actually advanced under circumstances the most hostile to advancement ; and the Negro in Jamaica or Carolina is, beyond all question, a more civilised being than the Negro on the coast of Guinea.*

The African race, then, is clearly not destined, like so many others, to be superseded and extinguished. Neither can we believe that it is destined to supply a perpetual helotry for superior tribes. It stands upon the earth a permanent member of the great human family—a joint inheritor of the globe—one among the elements out of which are to be evolved the future forms of the civilisation of mankind. What are the peculiar characteristics, the distinctive features, of this new element ? What the nature and direction of the influence it is destined to exert on the previously existing developments of human character ? These are speculations so veiled in the mist of the future, that a few conjectures and suggestions will be all we can venture to offer.

Our opportunities for observation of the Negro character have so far been very inadequate and unsatisfactory. We have seen him only in the unpierced darkness of his native forests, or amid the brutalising slavery of North America or Cuba, or in the anomalous position he has hitherto occupied in our own sugar islands. We have never yet seen him fairly exposed to civilising influences. Hence our knowledge of his character must necessarily be both superficial and imperfect. We have only contemplated him on one side, and from one point of view. Thus much, however, we think appears clearly.

* See Combe's Notes on America. Gurney's West Indies.

His character is rather that of the infancy of civilised than of the maturity of savage life. He has much of the child and much of the uneducated man about him. Like most children, and like most uncultivated minds in all countries, he has inordinate fondness for dress, for gaiety, for show. Like all persons of buoyant spirits, but of no mental resources—like the Roman savages under the Empire—his chief demand is for food and amusement,—*panem et circenses*. Like the children of most countries, like the grown up children of France, he delights in gaudy and flaunting spectacles. Like all men who have no intellectual pleasures and no moral refinement—like many, indeed, who are possessed of both, he is addicted to sensual enjoyments; but we do not know that he is so in any inordinate degree.

He appears to learn quickly—fully as quickly as most Europeans; to have great facility for the acquisition of knowledge, but to be defective in the inventive and initiative qualities. He seems to want logical capacity, at least in practice. Like the Irish, he is remarkable for *étourderie*.^{*} But much, if not all, of this may be accounted for by the fact that we have never seen him fairly thrown upon his own resources, and compelled to think for himself. Whenever he has been in contact with civilisation, he has always been in leading strings. Now, there is no degree of helplessness to which this may not reduce a man, or a nation.

As far, then, as we can form an estimate of the intellect of the African race, from the unfavourable circumstances under which alone we have been able to view it, we should pronounce it to be quick and ready, but not strong; imitative, not original. We should imagine that the Negro would not be likely to add to the stock of human knowledge, but that he would

^{*} Journal of a West Indian Proprietor. By M. Lewis. *Passim*, especially p. 393.

readily acquire whatever others had discovered; that, unassisted, he would not probably achieve any high degree of civilisation*; but that, when brought into connexion with European advancement, he will rise rapidly in cultivation; and that he is quite capable of holding a most respectable station in that congeries of ranks and classes which compose the great fabric of civilised society.

But it is from the peculiar moral qualities of the Negro that we anticipate the principal modifications of the future aspect of human civilisation. In these the African and the Caucasian race seem to be radically and essentially distinct. The one character seems to be, as it were, the complement and counterpart of the other. The European is vehement, energetic, proud, tenacious, and revengeful: the African† is docile, gentle, humble, grateful, and commonly forgiving. The one is ambitious, and easily aroused; the other meek, easily contented, and easily subdued. The one is to the other as the willow to the oak. The European character appears

* See, for many examples of Negro capacity, and the testimony of many writers to their moral qualities, Lawrence's "Lectures," vol. ii. pp. 217—222. If, as many eminent writers imagine, and as there seem ample grounds for concluding, the ancient Ethiopians were genuine Negroes, though exhibiting the peculiar features of that race in a less aggravated degree than the dwellers on the coast of Guinea, we should be justified in ascribing to that race far higher intellectual capacities than we have here claimed for them. The Ethiopians appear to have been the parents of Egyptian science and civilisation, and to have attained, as existing monuments attest, a high eminence in many arts in the very earliest periods of history. Those who wish to enter into this question in detail will find ample materials in Volney's "Ruins of Empires," App., p. 278; Pritchard's "Physical History of Man," vol. ii. pp. 282. 289. 330; Burkhardt's "Travels;" Denon, "Description de l'Egypte."

† There is no doubt considerable variation in the degree to which this delineation will apply to the different tribes of Africa. We speak of the generality of them.

to be the soil best fitted for the growth of the hardy and active virtues hallowed by Pagan morality; the African character to be more especially adapted for developing the mild and passive excellences which the gentle spirit of Christianity delights to honour.

There is a time for all things. There is a place, and an hour, in the divine plan, for all modifications of human character. Intellectual energy and Christian perfection are the fruits of different trees. Those hardier qualifications which are best suited to struggle through the rough infancy of the world; those stern and persevering endowments which alone can achieve the nobler victories of science, and acquire mastery over the powers and capabilities of inanimate matter; that grasping and daring ambition, than which no feebleness is required to fight the great battle of civilisation;—these are never the characteristics, nor often the concomitants, of that class of minds to whom the virtues of peace, charity, and humility, are natural and easy. Yet these are the virtues which our religion teaches us to strive for and to honour, as the last and best attainments of moral excellence. How difficult they are to us, the history of eighteen centuries has shown. The spirit of Christianity is at variance with the whole tone and elements of the European character;—it is in unison with many of the innate qualities of the African race.* To us it is of the most difficult attainment, and

* We are glad to be able to confirm our own speculations by the concurring views of so excellent a man and eminent an authority as Dr. Channing. We quote his words at page 33. of his "Treatise on Emancipation:"—

"We are holding in bondage one of the best races of the human family. The Negro is among the mildest and gentlest of men. He is singularly susceptible of improvement from abroad. His children, it is said, receive more rapidly than ours the elements of knowledge. How far he can originate improvements, time only can teach. His nature is affectionate, easily touched; and hence he is more open to

the term "self-crucifixion" is hardly too strong for the effort it requires; to them it is comparatively natural and easy.

Now the European character has performed its part nobly in the great drama of mankind's existence. What intellectual energy could do it has done, and is still doing: but, for the general triumph of the gentler virtues, the infusion of new blood seems to be required. The spirit of Christianity, as we have already observed, is out of harmony with the prevailing character of the Caucasian race. That such a religion should have sprung up and taken root among them, is one of the most singular facts of the world's history. It contradicted all their tastes and feelings. It succeeded, it made progress, because it approved itself to their under-

religious impressions than the white man. The European races have manifested more courage, enterprise, invention; but in the dispositions which Christianity particularly honours, how inferior are they to the African! When I cast my eyes over our southern region, the land of bowie knives, Lynch law, and duels,—of "chivalry," honour, and revenge,—and when I consider that Christianity is declared to be a spirit of charity, "which seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and endureth all things,"—can I hesitate in deciding to which of the races in that land Christianity is most adapted, and in which its noblest disciples are most likely to be reared? The African carries within him, much more than we, the germs of a meek, long-suffering virtue. A short residence among the Negroes in the West Indies impressed me with their capacity of improvement. On all sides I heard of their religious tendencies, the noblest in human nature. . . . I shall expect from the African race, if civilised, less energy, less courage, less intellectual originality, than in ours; but more amiableness, tranquillity, gentleness, and content. They might not rise to an equality in outward condition, but would probably be a much happier race."

Since transcribing these lines, we learn with regret that this excellent man has gone to his rest, and his recompense. We look upon him as one of the most exalted spirits of this age. We have known several of more splendid talents, but no man of a larger soul.

standing, and to their higher spiritual aspirations, though not to their natural sympathies; and accordingly, we find that among them it has never appeared in its own aspect, or worn its native garb. It has taken the colour of the tree on which it grew. It has assumed the character, and been compelled to patronise the vices, of the people who embraced it. It has been pressed into the service of a hostile power. Among the vehement and fiery Europeans, it has been a religion of pride and violence, not of gentleness and humility. It has been made to countenance bloodshed, to pamper pride, to exasperate animosity, to feed and foster all the harsh and baneful passions of humanity. But, transplanted among the African race, it may possibly find a more congenial soil, and bring forth fruits less foreign to its native character. And we are disposed to hope, and to think, that the Africans, when brought fairly into juxtaposition with European and with Christian knowledge, may, in the course of generations, gradually attain that peculiar modification of civilisation—hitherto a distant and a hopeless vision—when what is now the exception shall become the rule; when peace, gentleness, and goodwill shall be virtues of general diffusion; when “nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more;” when “they shall not hurt nor destroy” throughout the whole earth; when “they shall sit every man under his vine and his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid;” when (since human imperfection forbids the prospect of unfailing virtue), if vices there must be, they will be the vices of gentle frailty, not of fiery passions*; and when the world shall become the abode of—

* If it be objected that the character for gentleness and forbearance which we have here attributed to the Negro is ill borne out by the constant predatory wars between the savage tribes in the interior

“Cheerful creatures, whose most sinful deeds
Are but the overbeating of the heart,
And flow of too much happiness.”

That we are not altogether singular in entertaining such views may be seen from the following quotations from some Lectures on Man, delivered by an American writer at Cincinnati, in 1839:—

“When the epoch of the civilisation of the Negro family arrives in the lapse of ages, they will display in their native

of Africa, and not more justified by the history of Hayti, we must remind the objectors that the greater part of these native wars are excited by European traders, who first stimulate the desire of the African for European luxuries, and then point out the kidnapping of his brethren as the only means by which these luxuries can be purchased. The ferocity of the Negroes of Hayti, at the period of their revolution, was great and lamentable, but had been far exceeded by the previous and unprovoked barbarities of their oppressors,—and there are provocations which will arouse the meekest to terrible retaliation. On the other hand, compare the cruelties practised on the slaves in Cuba and America, with the rare instances of revenge on the part of the latter; compare the forbearance and endurance of the Negroes with what Europeans would manifest under similar oppressions, and we shall see ample reason to acknowledge that in these points a radical difference must subsist between the two nations.

The history of our West Indian Islands, especially since the emancipation, gives still more striking testimony in favour of the Negro; and, by implication, in favour of the planter also. In many of these islands the blacks are to the whites as ten to one in number; the wrongs endured by the former had, no doubt, been manifold and grievous; yet in no case, we believe, has there been any attempt even at such revenge as was easily and safely within their power. And we may feel perfectly certain that the result must have been far different had the previous conduct of the planters been any thing like what missionaries and abolitionists represented it to be; or had not the gentle and forgiving virtues been meted out to the Negroes in a far more ample measure than they ever were to any branches of the European race. Considerable confirmation of our views may be found in Lewis's “Journal,” especially as to the tractability and gratitude of the Negroes. See pp. 405—408.

land some very peculiar and interesting traits of character, of which we, a distinct branch of the human family, can at present form no conception. It will be—indeed it must be—a civilisation of a peculiar stamp; perhaps we may venture to conjecture, not so much distinguished by art, as by a certain beautiful nature; not so marked or adorned by science, as exalted and refined by a new and lovely theology,—a reflection of the light of heaven more perfect and endearing than that which the intellects of the Caucasian race have ever yet exhibited. There is more of the child, more of unsophisticated nature, in the Negro race than in the European. The peninsula of Africa is the home of the Negro, and the appropriate and distinct seat of his future glory and civilisation—a civilisation which we will not fear to predict will be as distinct in all its features from that of all other races, as his complexion and natural temperament and genius are different. If the Caucasian race is destined, as would appear from the precocity of their genius and their natural quickness and extreme aptitude for the arts, to reflect the lustre of the divine wisdom, or, to speak more properly, of the divine science, shall we envy the Negro if a later but far nobler civilisation await him,—to return the splendour of the divine attributes of mercy and benevolence in the practice and exhibition of the milder and gentler virtues? The sweeter graces of the Christian religion appear almost too tropical and tender plants to grow in the soil of the Caucasian mind; they require a character of human nature, of which you can see the rude lineaments in the Ethiopian, to be implanted in, and grow naturally and beautifully withal.”

If the views, then, which we have endeavoured to develope are correct (and we give them merely as hypotheses), the effect which may be anticipated from the influence of African blood and character will be, that the future progress of mankind will present an aspect rather moral than intellectual; that, to the advance in material and mental civilisation which the world owes to the classic and Teutonic races, will now be added improvement in those mild and happier virtues

which Christianity has so long and so fruitlessly en-joined; that the seed, which eighteen centuries ago was sown by the way side, or on the rock, or amid thorns, may now bear an ample harvest in a more kindly and congenial soil.

In the same Inaugural Lecture, a little further on, we find the following observations, page 39. :—

“If there be any signs, however uncertain, that we are living in the latest period of the world’s history, that no other races remain behind to perform what we have neglected, or to restore what we have ruined, then, indeed, the interest of modern history does become intense, and the importance of not wasting the time still left to us may well be called incalculable. When an army’s last reserve has been brought into the field, every single soldier knows that he must do his duty to the utmost; that if he cannot win the battle now, he must lose it. So if our existing nations are the last reserve of the world, its fate may be said to be in their hands: God’s work on earth will be left undone if they do not do it. But our future course must be hesitating or mistaken if we do not know what course has brought us to the point where we are at present. Otherwise, the simple fact that, after so many years of trial, the world has made no greater progress than it has done, must impress our minds injuriously; either making us despair of doing what our fathers have not done, or, if we do not despair, then it may make us unreasonably presumptuous, as if we could do more than had been done by other generations, because we were wiser than they, or better. But history forbids despair, without authorising vanity.”

History, no doubt, forbids despair; yet there are few more painful or perplexing reflections than those which arise in the mind of the student, when he contemplates the slow and oftentimes imperceptible progress which mankind has made towards achieving the two great objects of human destiny—happiness and virtue. We see some nations which, after a lapse of many thousand years, are still as helpless and ignorant as in the first

hours of their infancy: others (and these comprising a vast proportion of the human race) which reached many centuries ago a point of civilisation beyond which they have advanced, and seem capable of advancing no further step; others, again, which, in the dim remoteness of antiquity, had attained to an eminence of intellectual perfection, which in most of its elements has never since been surpassed, but from which they have long ago receded; while the more favoured portions of the race have advanced in their career of improvement with languid, unequal, and fitful steps, amid many interruptions, and with frequent lapses, often with questionable success, sometimes in doubtful directions. Six thousand years have passed over us, and what have we to show as the produce of that long existence? Much advance in natural science; splendid victories over material agencies; glorious achievements in the domain of intellect: but, on the other hand, startling social anomalies; grievous and deep-rooted social maladies; the great mass of our fellow creatures still vicious, ignorant, and wretched; the chief objects of being still dim in the distance; wisdom still scanty and undiffused; virtue still difficult; happiness still rare.

If, as we firmly believe, the attainment of these ends was the purpose and intention of man's creation, it is natural that we should feel perplexed at the patience of Providence (if we may use such an expression without irreverence), in watching such tardy fulfilment of his wise designs. But the whole history of his dealings with man points to this as the characteristic of his plans,—that perfection was meant to be of slow and most gradual attainment. The Deity has an eternity before him for the accomplishment of his purposes. Thousands of years elapsed,—hundreds of generations lived and passed away before the light of Christianity dawned upon the world; thousands of years and hundreds of

generations were again to flow into the silent gulf, before its influence was fully felt, and its mission everywhere fulfilled. The world was four thousand years old before the prolific form of Greek civilisation appeared to run its course, diffuse its light, and sow its seed; and it is only *now*, when some imagine that the world is verging to its final catastrophe, that the true objects and obligations of social union are beginning to be justly estimated. "Mais l'Etre éternel," says a French writer, "qui puise dans l'éternité, n'est pas économe de temps d'après notre manière."

"La marche de la Providence," says Guizot*, "n'est pas assujétie à d'étroites limites; elle ne s'inquiète pas de tirer aujourd'hui la conséquence du principe qu'elle a posé hier; elle la tirera dans des siècles, quand l'heure sera venue; et pour raisonner lentement selon nous, sa logique n'est pas moins sûre. La Providence a ses aises dans le temps; elle y marche en quelque sorte comme les Dieux d'Homère dans l'espace; elle fait un pas, et des siècles se trouvent écoulés. Que de temps, que d'événemens avant que la régénération de l'homme moral par le Christianisme ait exercé, sur la régénération de l'état social, sa grande et légitime influence!"

The human heart has, however, seldom enough depth in its philosophy, or resignation in its faith, to acquiesce contentedly in reflections such as these. We have a vague, dim, haunting feeling that, however true, they are yet unsatisfactory. We cannot contemplate without much profound awe, and something of natural regret, the arrangements of a Being who can watch, with calm and impassive eye, generation after generation roll by, without contributing, it may be, one calculable mite towards the accomplishment of his designs, and millions after millions of human creatures pass across the stage, their destiny unfulfilled, the objects of their existence unattained;—who, for six thousand years, has sent

* Histoire de la Civilisation en Europe, p. 23.

labourer after labourer into his vineyard to till the soil and to sow the seed for a harvest which still seems immeasurably remote, and in which these labourers are to have no participation; in whose estimation, in a word, any lapse of earthly time, any expenditure of human existence, seems wholly beneath consideration. The reflection unavoidably comes over us, that *we* too may be as they who have gone before us; that our fate, like theirs, may be to wander in the desert, afar from the promised land, which is the object of our common search; that our lot, like theirs, may be to sow, and not to reap.

Nevertheless, like many, doubtless, who have preceded us, we are disposed to hope for better things. Beyond all question we do inherit something—much—from our forerunners. The world has indisputably advanced, though with steps deplorably wavering and slow; and as we reap what the past has sown, it is but just that we should sow what the future is to reap. We trust, too, that the final harvest is somewhat nearer than it was; and our progress towards it steadier, surer, and more rapid than of old.

It may be that our hopes deceive us, but we think we can discern signs which indicate that we are on the eve of a more rapid and satisfactory advance in civilisation than has taken place at any former period. In particular, the distinctive and prophetic feature of our day, from which we argue so brightly for the coming times, is the general and novel acknowledgment of the paramount claims of the great mass of the community—of **THE PEOPLE**, in short. For the first time in the history of the world, the poor, the labourers, the basement story of the social edifice, appear to be rising to their due rank, not in social well-being, but at least in social estimation. In ancient days, these classes were, for the most part, slaves, valued and cared for as property, and no other-

wise ; or where not slaves, were mere serfs and helots to the dominant orders. In the period which intervened between the extinction of ancient civilisation and the subsidence of modern society into its existing form, the labouring classes, whether they existed in freedom or in villenage, were alike regarded by their superiors as created for their benefit, tools for their use, contributors to their pleasures, but wholly out of the pale of their sympathies. Even in the later periods of modern history, great as has been the progress made towards imposing restraints upon excessive power, and casting off the more galling fetters of human servitude, yet each successive victory of this description (important, no doubt, as so many necessary steps in the advancement of mankind) has been achieved by the middle classes ; or, if not altogether achieved by them, has been improved to their especial and exclusive benefit. The successive struggles for progress and emancipation of the various orders which compose the social scale, have left the base of the pyramid almost unstirred. The noble, the gentleman, the merchant, the burgher, have all worked their way to a condition, both of intellectual improvement and of material well-being, far beyond that of their forefathers ; but we fear that the peasant, the artisan, the daily labourer for daily bread, is much where he has always been ; lower relatively, not much higher in positive possessions. Food, clothing, and shelter,—a God to worship and a heaven to aspire to,—he must always have enjoyed ; and what more has he now ? Nay, even with these he is sometimes grudgingly and imperfectly supplied. To say that he is legally free—his own master—in bondage to no man, is to clothe him with an idle and unmeaning attribute ; for ignorance and destitution condemn a man to the fetters of a sterner and more capricious servitude than was ever sanctioned by the law.

The fact is, perhaps, easily accounted for. It is natural enough that the lowest in the scale should be the last to rise. The very prostration of these classes incapacitated them from raising themselves; and neither the ruling powers, nor the more fortunate orders of the community, had ever been taught to look upon the elevation of *THE PEOPLE* as the peculiar duty of their station, or the especial object for which they held their authority and advantages in trust. The labouring classes were regarded as beings destined to hold a fixed position, and to perform certain regular functions in the body politic; and as long as these functions went on without interruption, the people were out of sight, and therefore out of mind. It is a fact in human nature that we never extend our sympathies to those whose wants we do not share, whose feelings we do not experience, with whom we do not come constantly into contact. It belongs to God alone to be far removed from misery, and yet to remember it and compassionate it.*

* See, for an excellent exemplification of the limitations of class sympathy, "Philip Van Artevelde," vol. ii. p. 162. The following remarks and quotations from M. de Tocqueville ("Democracy in America," vol. ii. pp. 5—7.) are also worthy especial attention:—

"In 1675 the lower classes in Brittany revolted at the imposition of a new tax. These disturbances were put down with unexampled atrocity. Observe the language in which Madame de Sévigné, a witness of these horrors, relates them to her daughter:—

" 'Aux Rodeurs, 30th Octobre, 1675.

" 'Mon Dieu, ma fille, que votre lettre d'Aix est plaisante! Au moins relisez vos lettres avant que de les envoyer; laissez-vous surprendre à leur agrément, et consolez vous par ce plaisir de la peine que vous avez d'en tant écrire. . . . Voulez vous savoir des nouvelles de Rennes? On a fait une taxe de cent mille écus sur le bourgeois; et si on ne trouve point cette somme dans vingt-quatre heures, elle sera doublée et exigible par les soldats. On a chassé et banni toute une grande rue et défendu de les recueillir sous peine de la vie; de sorte qu'on voyait tous ces misérables,

We have had, indeed, from time to time, men rising up, of active dispositions and of warm benevolence, who, deeply impressed by some particular evil, or by the sufferings of some particular section of mankind, have zealously and successfully laboured to direct public attention to their removal. Thus Las Casas laboured for the Indians; Howard for the prisoners; Wilberforce for the slaves. But a real, genuine sympathy with the great body of the people, the feeling of a common brotherhood with them, a grave and earnest conviction that *to* them, both as the most numerous and the most needy of mankind, the especial attention of the easy, the affluent, and the powerful should be directed; that *for* them, power, wealth, and wisdom, are held in trust, and that *their* physical welfare, *their* moral elevation, *their* intellectual culture, constitute at once the prime duty of every government, and the most incumbent obligation

vieillards, femmes accouchées, enfans, errer en pleurs au sortir de cette ville sans savoir où aller. Ou roua avant-hier un violon, qui avait commencé la danse et la pillerie du papier timbré; il a été écartelé après sa mort, et ses quatre quartiers exposés aux quatre coins de la ville. Ou a pris soixante bourgeois, et on commence demain les punitions. Cette province est un bel exemple pour les autres, et surtout de respecter les gouverneurs et les gouvernantes, et de ne point jeter de pierres dans leur jardin.' . . .

"In another letter she adds:—

" 'Vous me parlez bien plaisamment de nos misères; nous ne sommes plus si roués, un en huit jours, pour entretenir la justice. Il est vrai que la penderie me paraît maintenant un rafraîchissement. J'ai une tout autre idée de la justice, depuis que je suis en ce pays. Vos galériens me paraissent une société d'honnêtes gens qui se sont retirés du monde pour mener une vie douce.'

"It would be a mistake to suppose that Madame de Sévigné, who wrote these lines, was a selfish or cruel person; she was passionately attached to her children, and very ready to sympathise in the sorrows of her friends; nay, her letters show that she treated her vassals and servants with kindness and indulgence. But Madame de Sévigné had no clear notion of suffering in any one who was not a person of quality."

of all whom Providence has blessed with a happier lot ; these conceptions of mighty import and of fertile promise have now, for the first time, taken possession of the public mind.* Inquiries are everywhere set on foot, information is eagerly desired as to the actual condition of the people ; and the press abounds with investigations of the causes, and suggestions for the remedy, of our social evils. And though each successive investigation brings to light fresh physical and moral mischief, more severe, deep-seated, extensive, and inveterate than we had ever dreamed of, yet we are consoled by reflecting that the full knowledge of it is the first step, and a vast step, towards its cure ; and that there is benevolence enough already in the world, if enlightened by wisdom and purified from party, to eradicate the larger portion of the evils we lament. How different, even now, would have been our social condition, if, on subjects such as these, inquiry had always preceded action, and knowledge accompanied zeal ; if the philanthropy which has been so fatally active in aggravating the disorder, had, through a wiser direction, been equally busy in allaying it ! For ourselves, now that the duty is acknowledged and the subject fairly taken up, our hopes are very sanguine ; for after long and considerate examination and reflection, we are convinced that all our social evils are wholly removeable or greatly mitigable ; that (as Dr. Chalmers once said) "the world is

* Compare the ignorance as to the condition of the lower classes, the neglect of their interests, the indifference to their misery, we might almost say the forgetfulness of their existence, which everywhere prevailed previous to the outbreak of the first French revolution, with the state of feeling on the same subject at present. In this country what a vast mass of fearful facts have been brought to light by our factory commissions, our handloom weavers' commissions, our mines' commissions, our sanatory and statistical reports ; while on the Continent, the same subjects have been ably investigated by such men as Villermé, Fregier, Degerando, and Arrivabene.

so constituted, that if we were morally right we should be physically happy;" that God made this earth to be the habitation of toiling and struggling, but still of happy, beings; and that (throwing aside individual cases where peculiar purposes have called for peculiar inflictions), wherever in any country the great mass are otherwise, it is because we have laboriously counteracted our destiny, or shamefully misused our means.

We dare scarcely allow ourselves to dwell on the splendid possibilities which it is not chimerical to anticipate for the future destinies of our race. Many who would allow the foundation to be laid in fact, would yet conceive that imagination had raised the superstructure. Yet when we say that we look forward to a time—as to an era attainable and within our reach—when all our more glaring and pervading social anomalies shall be amended; when the general aspect of the world shall be that of a contented, virtuous, and progressive state; when of the bad passions that now run riot in every form of vice, no more shall remain than those frailties which are inseparable from human imperfection; and when pain, disease, and destitution shall be reduced to that narrow modicum which science cannot cure, which temperance and forethought cannot escape, and which are inherent in the conditions of a perishable nature,—our visions will not be deemed wholly wild or baseless by those who reflect that we are anticipating not a creation of that which is *not*, but simply a selection and extension of that which *is*. What some *are*, all *may be*. What is now the exclusive patrimony of a few, may, under favourable circumstances, be enlarged into the common inheritance of all. Every man, it is true, cannot become as strong as Sampson, as wise as Socrates, as self-denying as Xavier or Loyola; but why should not the people of every country be as educated as the Swiss, as temperate as the Italians,

as contented as the Norwegians, as foreseeing as the Scotch, as energetic and enterprising as the English?

Or, to confine our attention to our own country, what is there to prevent the whole body of our working classes (with some few exceptions) from becoming, under wiser laws and better teaching, as frugal, as virtuous, as instructed, and as happy, as some among them even now are? This is the utmost scope of our ambition; this, the wildest flight of our imagination; and who shall say that it is a dream too hopeless or chimerical for the soberest reason to indulge? We do not expect, we do not even wish, that the labourer should cease out of the land; his condition is in itself a useful and an honourable one: there is no reason why it should not be a happy one—perhaps of all others the most happy. No condition upon earth, no position in society which the dispensations of Providence have rendered necessary, no station, however low, no occupation, however humble, which God has ordained, can be—or at least need be—otherwise than most respectable. That there should be a class of men who live by their daily labour—that this, indeed, should be the most numerous class in every social state—is the ordinance of God, and is doubtless a wise and a righteous one; but that this class should be otherwise than cultivated, virtuous, and contented, is the result, not of the ordination of Providence, but of the folly, the weakness, and the wickedness of man. It must never be forgotten, that *any* office may acquire dignity from the virtues of its holder; and that it is not the station, but the diligence and fidelity with which the duties of that station are discharged, that confer honour and entitle to reward.

Now we have seen working men who adorned and dignified their station: we have seen them toiling on from youth to age in unremitting but contented in-

dustry—securing constant employment by constant steadiness and skill—ensuring an adequate and comfortable subsistence by diligence, frugality, and forethought—earning efficient friends in the hour of need, by the uniform tenor of a blameless life; not giving to their children, it is true, an extensive or a scientific education, but bringing them up in habits of industry, and in “the nurture and admonition of the Lord;” and spending their scanty leisure, not in idleness or animal indulgence, but in healthy recreations, or in such intellectual pleasures as might be within their reach. All who have mixed much with the poor will agree that this is no imaginary character: we have known many such; and in our estimation, such men are objects of sincerer admiration, of deeper interest, of tenderer regard, than the statesman in the most successful hour of his ambition, or the rich man surrounded by all the elegances and refinements which wealth can purchase or lofty station can bestow.

Not, then, to raise such men out of their class, but to make all their class resemble them, should be our aim, and may be our attainment; by wiser institutions, and less selfish and clumsy legislation, to make that condition of comfort and contentment easy and possible to all which it now requires minds of no ordinary endowments to reach. The object, however, cannot be obtained *per saltum*: it will require the coadjutorship of many minds, in many different departments, for many tedious and toilsome years. But the moment we have convinced ourselves that it is attainable, or approachable, that moment it becomes an object, not only of reasonable desire, of sober hope, but of positive, paramount, pressing obligation, to all who have the power in any one line of exertion to promote it. Let each take that line for which he feels or conceives himself to be best fitted. The course of one man may be conspicuous



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and brilliant—that of his fellow-labourer humble and obscure; but the common cause in which they are engaged is alike to both; it is the noblest which can engage the energies of created man; it is the cause in which the wise and good of all ages have spent their strength; it is the cause in which Christ laboured while on earth. The path of active philanthropy is wide enough for all to walk in without jostling each other; in this career is no room for rivalry or strife, for what signifies it who is first, or who is last, in a race where there is no goal!

Among the foremost in this good cause was Dr. Arnold; and we cannot close the volumes before us without a deep feeling of sorrow for the untimely loss of this most excellent and useful man, who was called away from the scene of his labours to the scene of their reward in the full maturity of his powers, and at one of those critical periods in the transitions of public feeling when his influence could scarcely fail to have been attended with signal benefit to his country. His career, too, was brought to a close just at the moment when a new channel of celebrity and usefulness was opened to him by his elevation to the Chair of Modern History at Oxford. Had he lived to continue his duties in that chair, he must incontestably have done much to liberalise the tone of opinion in that university, to redeem its character with the public, and to instil into the minds of those who attended his prelections, and who would hereafter be called upon to play their part as lawgivers and rulers, those lessons of enlightened patriotism, generous philanthropy, and uncompromising principle, which were never more needed than at present. By all the pupils who had been under his tuition at Rugby, and a large portion of whom afterwards graduated at Oxford, he was regarded with almost reverential admiration, and

his influence over their feelings and opinions was almost unlimited ; while the respect, both for his character and his intellectual endowments, which was entertained by all his colleagues in the university, must have greatly strengthened the Liberal party, of which he was one of the most distinguished ornaments ; and must have contributed not a little to sweep back that tide of priestly intolerance which is striving to replace upon the nineteenth century the incubus which overshadowed the intellect and oppressed the energies of the middle ages.*

In the present state of the public mind in England, one of our greatest desiderata is a class of men who are at once truly liberal and truly pious, — whose liberality has been tried and proved, and whose piety cannot be gainsaid. Now, as at most previous times, we can boast of many individuals whose minds are stored with all the deep riches of philosophical acquirement, — men of firm principles, just conceptions, enlarged views, warm, earnest, and extended sympathies — minds clear to discern, single-hearted to desire, sincere and ener-

* “ Here there is always a tendency to magnify the past ; five-and-twenty years ago I can remember that it was the fashion to exalt the seventeenth century at the expense of the eighteenth : now, I believe, many are disposed to depreciate both, and to reserve their admiration for times still more remote, and more unlike our own. It is very well that we should not swim with the stream of public opinion : places like this are exceedingly valuable as temples where an older truth is still worshipped, which else might have been forgotten ; and some caricature of our proper business must at times be tolerated, for such is the tendency of humanity. But still, if we make it our glory to run counter to the general opinions of our age, making distance from them the measure of truth, we shall at once destroy our usefulness and our real respectability. And to believe seriously that the movement of the three last centuries has been a degeneracy—that the middle ages were wiser, or better, or happier, than our own, seeing truth more clearly and serving God more faithfully—would be an error so extravagant that no amount of prejudice could excuse us for entertaining it.”—*Lectures*, p. 356.

getic to pursue the real interests of their kind. We possess also, in a rich abundance, men to whom religious truth, as they conceive it, is the one thing needful, — who cling to their creed with the same passionate and predominant attachment which was felt by the martyrs and confessors of more enthusiastic days, — who seek to regulate their slightest actions by precepts extracted from the Scriptures, — whose contemplations are fixed, and whose hopes are directed towards another life. But unhappily these two parties are generally distinct, and their mutual attitude is one rather of hostility than friendship. We meet with few in whom these qualities — certainly not in themselves irreconcilable — are united and in harmony. The two classes regard each other with a degree of reciprocal distrust, which impairs the utility of both. The enlightenment of the wise man is deprived of its due influence by the suspicion of religious indifference, or heresy; and the piety of the religious man cannot have its natural effect as an example, while he is open to the charge of weakness of intellect or narrowness of mind. These are recriminations in which both parties are too apt to indulge; and in order to weaken their effect and demonstrate their injustice, we require to be able to point to individuals whom piety and wisdom have combined to consecrate, — whose enlarged views and whose religious faith are both too indisputable for either of them to cast the shadow of a doubt or slur upon the reality of the other.

Of these men, few and rare, the salt of the earth, Dr. Arnold was one of the most remarkable whom we have known. In him piety was never found in the unsuitable company of weakness. He presented the unwonted spectacle of a man whose whole career was guided by the firmest religious principles, and the warmest devotional feeling, yet whose religion never

led him to act absurdly or to judge uncharitably. In his character and conduct throughout life, the most sincere and fervent piety was seen united with a clearness of vision, a depth of research, a logical sagacity, a comprehensive philosophy, a strength of purpose, a sympathy with the interests, and a toleration for the feelings of the world, which are rarely its concomitants; and was at the same time utterly free from any taint, either of spiritual pride, of intrusive sanctity, or of narrowness of heart. And this we believe to have been the secret of the almost universal estimation in which he was held by men of all classes and all diversities of opinion. Had he been a less sincere, or a less pious Christian, the influence of his liberal and enlightened wisdom would have been unfelt by the religious world. Had his profound knowledge and philosophical acumen been less indisputable, the influence of his piety would have been lost upon the world at large. By uniting the excellences of both characters, he was enabled to make religious sincerity lovely and respectable in the eyes of the indifferent and the worldly; he was able, also, to obtain from the less liberal of his priestly brethren, a patient consideration for doctrines of wise and charitable equity, which, coming from more ambiguous quarters, would have been scouted as impious, and condemned without a hearing.

Dr. Arnold's clearness of intellect and genuine liberality of heart, enabled him, and him alone of all his brethren of the church, to discover the true principle of mutual religious toleration, and the only basis on which harmony among Christians can ever be securely built; viz., the acknowledgment that *unity of practical aim*, not *unity of speculative faith*, should be the bond of brotherhood between them. None but an enlightened man could have conceived the following sentiments; none but a man whose sincere religious belief was

above suspicion, would have dared to give them utterance *: —

“ All societies of men, whether we call them states or churches, should make their bond to consist in a common object and a common practice, rather than in a common belief; in other words, their end should be Good rather than Truth. We may consent to act together, but we cannot consent to believe together. Many motives may persuade us to the one; we may like the object, or we may like our company, or we may think it safest to join them, or most convenient; and any one of these motives is quite sufficient to induce an unity of action — action being a thing in our own power. But no motives can persuade us to believe together: we may wish a statement to be true, we may admire those who believe it, we may find it very inconvenient not to believe it; all this helps us nothing: unless our own mind is freely convinced that the statement or doctrine be true, we cannot by possibility believe it. That union in action will in the end lead very often to union of belief, is most true; but we cannot ensure its doing so, and the social bond cannot directly require for its perfectness more than union of action: it cannot properly require more than it is in the power of men to give; and men can submit their actions to a common law at their own choice, but their internal convictions they cannot.

“ Such an union of action appears historically to have been the original bond of the Christian Church. Whoever was willing to receive Christ as his master, to join his people, and to walk according to their rules, was admitted to the Christian society. We know that in the earliest church there existed the strangest varieties of belief, some Christians not even believing that there would be a resurrection of the dead. Of course it was not intended that such varieties should be perpetual; a closer

* We recommend this lesson of charity from a divine of unquestioned orthodoxy to the consideration of our Christian brethren :—

“ If by the term *heretic* we are to imply moral guilt, then I am not justified in applying it to any Christian unless his doctrines are positively sinful, or unless there is something wicked, either in the way of dishonesty or bitterness, in his manner of maintaining them.”
— *Christian Course and Character*, App., p. 478.

union of belief was gradually effected ; but the point to observe is, that the union of belief grew out of the union of action ; it was the result of belonging to the society, rather than a previous condition required for belonging to it. And it is true, farther, that all union of action implies in one sense an union of belief ; that is, they who agree to do a certain thing, must believe that in some way or other, either as a positive good or as the lesser evil, it is desirable for them to do it. But belief in the desirableness of an act differs greatly from belief in the truth of a proposition. Even fear may give unity of action, and such unity of belief as is implied by it : a soldier is threatened with death if he does not fight ; and so, believing that to fight is now desirable for him, as a less evil than certain death, he stands his ground, and fights accordingly. But fear, though it may make us wish with all our hearts that we could believe the truth of a proposition, yet cannot enable or compel us to believe it." — *Lectures*, pp. 50—52.

Dr. Arnold was not one of those men who abound in almost all sects, but more especially among established ones, who hold fast their faith by a surrender of their intellectual powers ; and who, dreading and suspecting the conclusions to which thought might lead them, resolutely shut their eyes to the light which they vaguely fear might prove their cherished doctrines to be untenable delusions. He repudiated so base a compromise between reason and religion. He would have mistrusted a creed which could only be upheld by a sacrifice of intellectual integrity. He would have scorned a faith which rested on so discreditable and so frail a tenure. A religion which had reason for its enemy and not for its ally, would for him have had no charms, would from him have had no allegiance.

"Faith without reason is not properly faith, but mere power worship ; and power worship may be devil worship ; for it is reason which entertains the idea of God — an idea essentially made up of truth and goodness, no less than of power. A sign of power exhibited to the senses might, through them, dispose

the whole man to acknowledge it as divine ; yet power in itself is not divine — it may be devilish. But when reason recognises that along with this power there exist also wisdom and goodness, then it perceives that here is God ; and the worship which without reason might have been idolatry, being now according to reason, is faith.

“ If this were considered, men would be more careful of speaking disparagingly of reason, seeing that it is the necessary condition of the existence of faith. It is quite true, that when we have attained to faith it supersedes reason ; we walk by sunlight rather than by moonlight, following the guidance of infinite reason instead of finite. But how are we to attain to faith ? — in other words, how can we distinguish God's voice from the voice of evil ? For we must distinguish it to be God's voice before we can have faith in it. We distinguish it — and can distinguish it no otherwise — by comparing it with that idea of God which reason intuitively enjoys, the gift of reason being God's original revelation of himself to man. Now, if the voice which comes to us from the unseen world agree not with this idea, we have no choice but to pronounce it not to be God's voice, for no signs of power in confirmation of it can alone prove it to be God.” — *Christian Course and Character*, App. p. 462.

The manly tone of feeling, and genuine Christian uprightness, displayed in the following passage, will be a sufficient excuse to our readers for adding it to the last : —

“ After observing God's gracious care for us in this instance, as well as in those which I have noticed before, I cannot but feel that we may safely trust him for every other similar case, if any such there be, and that he will not permit our faith either in him or in his holy word to be shaken, because we do not attempt to close our eyes against truth, nor seek to support our faith by sophistry and falsehood. Feeling what the Scriptures are, I would not give unnecessary pain to any one by an enumeration of those points in which the literal historical statement of an inspired writer has been vainly defended. Some instances will probably occur to most readers ; others are perhaps not known, and never will be known to many, nor is it at all needful or desirable that they should know them ; but if

ever they are brought before them, let them not try to put them aside unfairly, from a fear that they will injure our faith; let us not do evil that evil may be escaped from; and it is an evil, and the fruitful parent of evils innumerable, to do violence to our understanding or to our reason in their own appointed fields — to maintain falsehood in their despite, and reject the truth which they sanction. If writers of Mr. Newman's school will persist in displaying the difficulties of the Scripture before the eyes of those who had not been before aware of them, let those who are so cruelly tempted be conjured not to be dismayed; to refuse utterly to surrender up their sense of truth; to persist in rejecting the unchristian falsehoods which they are called upon to worship: sure that after all that can be said, that system will remain false to the end; and their Christian faith, if they do not faithlessly attempt to strengthen it by unlawful means, will stand no less unshaken." — *Christian Course and Character*, App. p. 491.

Among the perplexing problems which the intricacies of the human mind present to our reflection, few are so difficult of solution as the strange inconsistencies, the palpable contradictions, so frequently observable in the opinions of the most competent reasoners, and in the conduct of the most upright men. We find individuals not only acting in direct contravention of their known opinions — that is a condition and a consequence of human frailty — but entirely unconscious of the want of conformity between their practice and their principles. We find men of the most logical understandings holding and avowing, at the same moment and with equal sincerity, doctrines which no logic can reconcile, — yet wholly unaware of the incongruity. We find others pursuing a course of conduct obviously incompatible with their notions of integrity and honour, — yet we know them to be incapable of intentional violations of either. It is difficult to say how these inconsistencies are to be explained or reconciled; but the knowledge of their existence in the most

excellent and able men (and in all likelihood, therefore, in ourselves also) should teach us a large indulgence for the most startling incongruities, and habitual charity in the judgments we form of the moral character of others, by convincing us that what seems to us dishonesty is in reality often a mere consequence of mental imperfection; and that the want of integrity so frequently apparent both in the dealings and the reasonings of men, is the fault rather of the head than of the heart. The secret turnings and windings of unconscious self-deception, are inconceivably numerous and subtle. The strength of mind to avoid or break through all self-sophistry has been bestowed on few or none; and we believe it would be impossible to point to a single individual, with the clearest intellect and the most honest heart, who has not, at some period or other, held in connexion opinions wholly incompatible and mutually destructive.

One cause of this singularity perhaps is, that we can never regard any questions, except mathematical ones, as questions of pure abstraction; certain consequences, certain ulterior conclusions, immediate or remote, follow from whatever decision we may arrive at, which, though entirely irrelevant to the investigation, cannot, in our minds, be wholly separated from it.* In addition to

* If we perceive that certain results, either in speculation or in action, will ensue from either conclusion to which our reasoning may lead us, the sentiments, either of fondness or aversion, with which we regard these results, will inevitably and unconsciously bias our decision:

"It has unfortunately happened," observes Dr. Arnold, "that the difficulties of the Scripture have generally been treated as objections to the truth of Christianity; as such they have been pressed by adversaries, and as such Christian writers have replied to them. But then they become of such tremendous interest, that it is scarcely possible to examine them fairly. If my faith in God, and my hope of eternal life, is to depend on the accuracy of a date, or some

this, few men come to the examination of a question without having in some measure, though it may be unconsciously, prejudged the case,—without having some vague impression as to what the conclusion ought to be; and throughout the processes of reasoning they are constantly giving a side glance to see whether they are running parallel to their expected course, are proceeding direct towards their anticipated goal; and if not, the temptation slightly to swerve and modify their path becomes inevitable, and sometimes irresistible. Moreover, in very important cases, few men, even the ablest dialecticians, have perfect confidence in the accuracy of their own logic; their instincts, their previous impressions, their early predilections, have still a great, though an unacknowledged, weight; and if their train of argument have led them to a conclusion at variance with their secret convictions, they cannot avoid suspecting that a flaw must somewhere have crept in, though the closest scrutiny should be unable to detect it. In plain truth, the most powerful reasoner cannot entirely make abstraction of attendant consequences; nor the most upright mind wholly divest itself of an unlawful reliance on impressions which are not the results, but the forerunners, of inquiry. Human ratiocination, therefore, will never be perfectly trustworthy, because never purely speculative. Thus, though pure logic cannot be the parent of incongruous conclusions, logic thus modified and made imperfect may lead the same individual to opinions wholly incompatible and contradictory.

Again, few men can make out a good title to all the

minute historical particular, who can wonder that I should listen to any sophistry in defence of them, or that I should force my mind to do any sort of violence to itself, when life and death seem to hang on the issue of its decision?"—*Christian Course*, &c., App. p. 486.

doctrines which they hold. Few men have arrived at all, or even the majority, of their opinions by the process of reasoning. Most of us have derived the greater portion of our convictions and our views from early impressions, from parental teaching, from subsequent condition or companionship. Now there is certainly no reason to expect that the conclusions we have inherited from others, and the conclusions we have elaborated for ourselves, will always be consistent and compatible. Indeed, from the natural diversity of men's minds, there is reason to anticipate the exact contrary. And as no man probably, even the most diligent and thoughtful, in the course even of a long life, subjects to close examination every opinion of which he finds himself possessed, we perceive how it may easily come to pass that he shall hold, with equal tenacity and equal sincerity, two contradictory doctrines, but of which the contradiction has escaped his notice.

With others, again—and these often men of perfect honesty—the heart is wiser and sounder than the head. From some preliminary false assumption, from some basis of argument originally wrong, they are constantly arriving at conclusions which the better feelings of their nature disavow. They hold opinions theoretically which the juster decisions of the heart forbid them to realise. They profess doctrines, from the legitimate consequences of which they shrink back aghast. They embrace a cause, but repudiate its consequence. And, believing the premises but denying the conclusion, they hold the strange severance of the two to be one of the obscurer mysteries of their faith, which human reason cannot penetrate, and the solution of which is reserved for another state of being. This is peculiarly the case among those milder spirits who have embraced the Calvinistic creed.

The author of "Rasselas" has given us another explanation of human inconsistency : —

"To the mind, as to the eye, it is difficult to compare with exactness objects vast in their extent, and various in their parts. Where we see or conceive the whole at once, we readily note the discriminations, and decide the preference : but of two systems, of which neither can be surveyed by any human being in its full compass of magnitude and multiplicity of complication, where is the wonder that, judging of the whole by parts, I am alternately affected by one or the other, as either presses on my memory or fancy? We differ from ourselves just as we differ from each other, when we see only part of the question, as in the multifarious relations of politics and morality ; but when we perceive the whole at once, as in numerical computations, all agree in one judgment, and none ever varies his opinion."

Bearing in mind, then, this common frailty of the human understanding, we shall not be surprised to find, even in a man of Dr. Arnold's capacity and worth, what appear to us some singular inconsistencies of conduct and opinion ; and, finding them in him, we shall believe that no man may flatter himself with the notion of being himself exempted from a similar imperfection. In the passage cited at page 32.*, and in many others that

* The following passage appears to us a singular attempt on the part of a powerful and sincere mind to escape from a dilemma forced upon it by adherence to a church whose standard of sense and Christian charity was far lower than its own : —

"The Church of England expressly disclaims the authority of councils, and in its official instruments it neither allows nor condemns private judgment ; but the opinions of the Reformers, and the constitution of the Church in the sixteenth century, were certainly against private judgment ; their authority for the interpretation of Scripture was undoubtedly the supreme government of the Church, *i. e.* not the bishops, but the king and parliament. But then this had respect not to the power of discerning truth, but to the right of publishing it, which is a wholly different question. That an individual was not bound *in foro conscientiae* to admit the truth of any interpretation of Scripture which did not approve itself to his

might be adduced, Dr. Arnold urged, in the strongest language, that unity of aim, and not unity of opinion, should form the bond and cement between the members of a Christian community: yet he retained his position as minister of a church which binds all within its pale by the strictest shackles of a common creed. He maintained the right, and the obligation, of private judgment on religious points as sacred and inalienable, and the sin and danger of biassing the mind by the attachment of penalties or advantages to either decision: yet he more than once subscribed his allegiance to a church which, whatever specious gloss it may put upon the matter, considers difference of opinion as criminal, and has long attached to it civil disabilities and spiritual menaces. He regarded as absurd and wicked every attempt to suppress heresy by force: yet every sabbath he prayed that the civil power might execute the duty of "maintaining truth." He repeatedly declared his conviction that mere error of belief was not culpable, because it was inevitable; that the sincerest inquirers would necessarily arrive at doctrines the most opposite on points the most important: yet he professed, and we doubt not conscientiously repeated, an unintelligible creed, which declares that whoever differs from that creed "without doubt shall perish everlastingly." Such are the melancholy anomalies which even the most upright minds cannot escape when hampered by a false position.

own mind, was no less the judgment of the Church of England, than that if he publicly disputed the interpretation of the Church, he might be punished as unruly, and a despiser of government. But then it should ever be remembered that the Church, with the Reformers, was not the clergy. And now that the right of publication is conceded by the Church, it is quite just to say that the Church of England allows private judgment; and *if that judgment differs from her own, she condemns not the act of judging at all, but the having come to a false conclusion!*"—*Christian Course, &c.*, App. p. 476.

The life of few has been more emphatically a life of labour than Dr. Arnold's. "He was a man of most unsleeping spirit." Gifted with a constitution of unusual vigour, and a mind of untiring energy, he felt that toil was his mission, his vocation upon earth, "the work that was given him to do." He lived "as ever in his great Taskmaster's eye." As long as a man was suffered to remain upon the earth, he considered it as an intimation from Providence that there was some duty for him to discharge, which it would be mean and criminal to decline. He had an ever active, ever present conviction, that the allotted duties of a station and a capacity like his were of a nature which could at best be only imperfectly performed, even by the devotion of every hour and the consecration of every faculty; and that all relaxation, all amusement, beyond what was absolutely essential for the preservation of health and strength, was a weakness, if not a sin.*

"Do we not know that he, who gave to the earth its richness, and who set the sun to shine in the heavens, and who gave us that wonderful frame of body and mind, whose healthful workings are so delightful to us,—gave them that we might use both body and mind in his service; that the soldier has something else to do than to gaze like a child on the splendour of his uniform, or the brightness of his sword; that those faculties which we feel, as it were, burning within us, have their work before them,—a work far above their strength, though multi-

* "In men who are worthy of this destiny, all weariness, all sadness, though it be warrantable, is weakness. Their mission is toil—their reward the success of their work; but still in toil."—*Guizot's Washington*.

See also Foster's character of Howard ("Essays," p. 122.):—

"His conduct implied an inconceivable severity of conviction that he had one thing to do, and that he who would do some great thing in this short life must apply himself to the task with such a concentration of his forces, as, to idle spectators who live only to amuse themselves, looks like insanity."

plied a thousand fold; that the call to them to be busy is never silent; that there is an infinite voice in the infinite sins and sufferings of millions which proclaims that the contest is raging around us; that every idle moment is treason; that now is the time for unceasing efforts; and that not till the victory is gained may Christ's soldiers throw aside their arms, and resign themselves to enjoyment and to rest. . . . We must sadly remember that, although we can enjoy, yet many are suffering; and that whilst they are so, enjoyment in us for more than a brief space of needful rest, cannot but be sin. . . . The evil that is in the world makes it a sin to resign ourselves to any enjoyment, except as a permitted refreshment to strengthen us for duty to come."—*Sermons*, pp. 61, 62.

This habitual preference of toil to pleasure—this severe resolve "to scorn delights and live laborious days," arose from no insensibility to the enjoyments either of nature or of society, from no deficiency in any of the tastes or feelings which usually distract men from the harder and drier duties of life. Few men were more keenly alive to the beauties of scenery, the fascinations of literature, or the amenities of social intercourse. Few men were ever so happily constituted both as to corporeal and mental endowments; and few certainly inherited from their constitution a more full and genuine spirit of enjoyment. He belonged not to those

"Who look on all the joys of time
With undesiring eyes;"

but to those

"Who feel the witchery, yet defy the thrall."

And although no doubt this victory of duty was at length easy, natural, and achieved without a struggle, yet in him, as in others, it had become so only by being habitual and unvaried, and sought for in obedience to one pervading principle.

Yet, on the whole, Dr. Arnold's case is one of many

which occur to us, which show that even upon earth the highest virtue is often, though not always, and naturally, though not necessarily, a passport to the most serene enjoyment. His life was one of reward as well as effort; of recompense as well as toil. He reaped as well as sowed, and he reaped *what* he sowed. His career was one of constant advance in worldly prosperity; his occupations were mostly of a kind in which he felt a deep and lively interest, which relieved them of all their drudgery; and, to crown the whole, his domestic felicity was great, and almost unclouded to the last. Perhaps this, which was assuredly the chief blessing of his earthly pilgrimage, was also the great source and secret of his indefatigable energy. A man whose home is happy, whose affections are satisfied while they are summoned forth, can not only pursue his objects and labour in his calling without distraction, but he has an inexhaustible wellspring of zeal and energy within him; not only does the repose of the heart give freer scope to the intellect, and wing it for loftier flights, but the tender and gentle charities of the domestic circle form at once the appropriate solace, the recreation, and the resting-place after severe mental exertions,—and their “exceeding great reward.” But he, to whom the priceless riches of fireside happiness have been more scantily meted out—over whose interior life is hung a nightmare of disappointment, anguish, or anxiety; for whom the treasury of hope is empty, and who has no future before him to redeem and compensate the past—such a man, if he has still fortitude enough to pursue his subjects of thought or his objects of exertion, pursues them under a dreadful disadvantage; he writes, he thinks, he labours, under the constant pressure of a heavy, though unseen, hand; there is an incubus upon his soul, which, if shaken off for a moment, only returns with a more unconquerable

grasp, and a more intolerable weight; he is never *alone* with his subject or his aim, but a haunting spectre is incessantly beside him, interrupting the communion, and casting a gloom and a darkness over space; his energy is wasted, and his soul is weakened in internal struggles; and if he still toils on, it is not with that singleness of purpose which alone can achieve anything worth achieving; it is less to illustrate his topic or to gain his end, than to smother reflection and to squander time. From labours pursued under such conditions, little can be hoped; at best only displays of sad and fitful, but ineffective, strength; never that steadiness, calmness, and continuity, which are essential for the attainment of great results.

Dr. Arnold enjoyed another great source of happiness which, to a considerable extent, is within the reach of all. He felt that he was always doing good. His habitual occupations as an educator, though often no doubt irksome enough, were of a kind to produce certain, and generally profitable, results; their success, when successful, obvious and direct. The avocations of the generality of men have, for the most part, objects distinct from the good of their fellow creatures; and the benefit they produce to others is unseen, uncertain, and remote. In most other professions, philanthropy forms not the staple labour, but at best the occasional recreation, or the ultimate and indirect aim. With the two to which Dr. Arnold belonged, it was the actual business of every hour; and throughout his whole career he was able to repose on the conviction—the most soothing and supporting the human mind can entertain—that the world was the better for his labours, that he had not lived in vain.

Well may we repine at the early loss of so rare a pattern of human, and therefore of attainable, excellence. Had he reached the usual period allotted to man's

earthly pilgrimage, and died as full of years as he did of honour, our only sentiment would have been

“ A holy concord, and a bright regret,
A glorious sympathy with suns that set.”

But now this is mingled with the sadder feeling of disappointment which inevitably attends an unfulfilled purpose, an interrupted drama, an unfinished history ; and with the perplexity consequent on a dispensation which we cannot understand.

The wisdom of Providence is, indeed, unsearchable, and its ways past finding out. Mortal plummet cannot fathom them. Human sagacity can rarely penetrate them. The frailty of human affections cannot always acquiesce in them. When the infant—the object of a parent’s hope—is removed in the first few hours of conscious existence, we may indeed conceive that it is mercy which has rescued him from the sad chances of the lottery of life. When the young, the lovely, and the gentle, are called away in the early spring time of their course, to a brighter and more fitting home, we may find consolation under the bereavement, in the reflection that the youth which here would have passed rapidly away, is become unfading and perennial elsewhere ; that the beauty which time might have tarnished, or sorrow have withered, or sin covered with a cloud, is now safe, changeless, and immortal ; and that the soft and gentle disposition, on which the trials of earth might have borne too roughly, is now in a beautiful and tranquil resting-place, where it can no more be harassed by care, or soured by suffering and unkindness. When the sinner is cut short in his career of crime, before the backward path of repentance and atonement has commenced, we may still imagine the hand of mercy in the dispensation which has called him away before his sins had accumulated past the hope of pardon or re-

demption. When the ambitious man, who has paid away all the other hopes and enjoyments of life for the hollow recompense of power, is summoned to his last account just as the splendid bauble, which it was the object of his life to gain, is at length within his reach, and his hand is stretched out to grasp it,—we cannot mourn for him as an unhappy or a disappointed man, for we know that the world's severest disappointment is reserved for those, not who fail to obtain the prize, but who find it worthless when obtained; and that it is in the race, not in the goal—in the battle, not in the victory, that true enjoyment lies.

But when a mind, armed and trained for all the trials and all the requirements of this earthly pilgrimage,—bold to encounter the perils of the world, strong to endure its evils, zealous to amend its sinfulness, earnest and untiring to alleviate its woes,—when a light such as this is quenched,—when a man, whose life was spent in doing good, is prematurely removed from a world in which doing good is our allotted mission; when Providence suddenly summons away the most active and the most successful of its fellow-labourers; when God destroys His best instruments and His ablest workmen, and this too at the very moment when they had attained the position of all others the most fitted for extending their usefulness and developing their powers;—then it is that we are lost in the attempt to fathom the workings of the divine mind; then it is that the guiding light becomes a cloudy screen; and that the duty of unquestioning and thankful acquiescence derives no assistance or enlightenment from the suggestions of reason, the speculations of fancy, or the teachings of revealed religion.

DR. ARNOLD'S LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE.*

MORE interesting—more serviceable—more timely volumes have seldom issued from the press. They contain the records of a life and mind of no ordinary cast; a life distinguished, indeed, by few remarkable events, but spent in the service of God and man;—and a mind singularly energetic, earnest, and sincere; gifted with rare endowments, and sound to its very core.

Mr. Stanley's task has been admirably executed. We never remember to have met with any memoirs—unless, perhaps, those of Sir Samuel Romilly—in which the biographer's part presents so little matter for criticism, and so much for sincere praise and admiration. Sound judgment, delicate tact, and a thorough comprehension of, and sympathy with, his subject, are conspicuous in every line.

Dr. Arnold was educated at Winchester school, where he remained from his twelfth to his sixteenth year. In 1811 he was elected as a scholar at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and soon obtained several university honours, and formed many friendships, to which he clung with unusual tenacity throughout his subsequent life. When he entered Oriel College as a fellow, in 1815, it numbered among its residents such men as Coplestone, Hampden, Whateley, Keble, and shortly afterwards Newman and Pusey, names since so famous in the ecclesiastical history of our times.

Few earnest and reflecting minds ever passed through the period of youth without finding their religious faith

* *Life and Correspondence of Dr. Arnold.* By the Rev. A. P. STANLEY. 1844.

assailed by harassing doubts and difficulties; doubts which it is the happiness of many to elucidate and satisfy, which it is the sin of others to silence and suppress, and from which the careless, the ignorant, and the narrow, alone can purchase an unworthy and unenviable exemption. Arnold possessed too thoughtful and too honest a mind to escape the common lot; and though his doubts were afterwards exchanged for the most settled and happy convictions on all important points of Christian doctrine, yet for a time they were to the last degree distressing to his scrupulously conscientious mind, and ever after secured from him a deep and ready sympathy for all who had similar periods of trial to undergo. The following is the advice given him on the occasion by an orthodox friend, whose name Mr. Stanley considerably withholds from the opprobrium which such deliberate and avowed dishonesty deserves:—

“The subject of them (Dr. Arnold's doubts) is that most awful one, on which all very inquisitive reasoning minds are, I believe, most liable to such temptations—I mean the doctrine of the blessed Trinity. Do not start, my dear Coleridge; I do not believe that Arnold has any serious scruples of the understanding about it, but *it is a defect of his mind* that he cannot get rid of a certain feeling of objections—and particularly when, as he fancies, the bias is so strong upon him to decide one way from interest;—he scruples doing WHAT I ADVISE HIM, *which is, to put down the objections by main force whenever they arise in his mind*, fearful that in so doing he shall be violating his conscience for a maintenance' sake.”—Vol. i. p. 22.

This is a fair specimen of that tampering with truth—that trampling upon mental integrity, in which so many divines permit themselves to indulge without any apparent consciousness of its iniquity; and which is at once a cause and a confession of the rottenness of the foundation on which much of our dogmatic theology is reared. The same misty conceptions of right and wrong

which are displayed in the passage we have cited, would have dictated and sanctioned the most impious of the "pious frauds" of the priestly ages; and are eminently distinctive of those "orthodox liars for God," of whom Coleridge speaks with such righteous abhorrence.

"I should," says that great thinker, in reference to his own religious doubts, "perhaps be a happier—at all events a more useful man, if my mind were otherwise constituted. But so it is; and even with regard to Christianity itself, like certain plants, I creep towards the *light*, even though it draw me away from the more nourishing warmth."*

Dr. Arnold's idea of the treatment which doctrinal doubts ought to meet with from honest and inquiring minds, was happily not that of his clerical adviser.

"What I most crave to see," he says in a letter to a friend in 1838, "and what still seems to me no impossible dream, is *inquiry and belief going together.*"

Again, he writes to Lady Francis Egerton:—

"Weakness of faith is partly constitutional, and partly the result of education and other circumstances; and this may go intellectually almost as far as scepticism; that is to say, a man may be perfectly unable to acquire a firm and undoubting belief of the great truths of religion, whether natural or revealed. He may be perplexed with doubts all his days; nay, his fears lest the Gospel should not be true, may be stronger than his hopes that it will. And this is a state of great pain, and of most severe trial; *to be pitied heartily, but not to be condemned.*"—Vol. i. p. 283.

This topic is one of so much importance in our estimate of Dr. Arnold's character, that we shall be excused for quoting one other passage illustrative of his views upon it;—a passage deserving the deepest consideration from those who wonder at the number of serious and powerful minds who in every age have turned with

* Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit.

loathing from evangelical religion in the only form in which it has ever been presented to them.

“ Authority cannot compel belief. The sceptic, who knows not what it is to grasp anything with the firm grasp of faith, may mistake his acquiescence in a doctrine for belief in it; the ignorant and careless, who believe only what their senses tell them, may lay up the words of divine truth in their memory, may repeat them loudly, and be vehement against all who question them. But minds to which faith is a necessity, which cannot be contented to stand by the side of truth, but must become altogether one with it,—minds which know full well the difference between opinion and conviction, *between not questioning and believing*; they, when their own action is superseded by an authority foreign to themselves, are in a condition which they find to be intolerable. Told to believe what they cannot believe, told that they ought not to believe what they feel most disposed to believe, *they retire altogether from the region of divine truth, as from a spot tainted with moral death*, and devote themselves to other subjects; to physical science it may be, or to political; where the inherent craving of their nature may yet be gratified; where, however insignificant the truth may be, they may yet find some truth to believe. This has been the condition of too many great men in the Church of Rome; and it accounts for that bitterness of feeling with which Machiavelli, and others like him, appeared to have regarded the whole subject of Christianity.” . . . “ Let us not do evil, that evil may be escaped from; and *it is an evil, and the fruitful parent of evils innumerable*, to do violence to our understanding or to our reason in their appointed fields. By God's blessing, if we do go boldly forward wherever truth shall lead us, our course need not be interrupted, neither shall a single hair of our faith perish.” — *Notes to Vol. IV. of Sermons*, pp. 475—483.

After leaving Oxford, Dr. Arnold settled at Laleham, where he remained for nine years, occupied in preparing pupils for the University—an employment in which he appears to have felt real pleasure—and in preparing his valuable edition of “Thucydides.” It was during

this period, also, that his attention began to be directed to those studies which induced him subsequently to undertake his "History of Rome;" the work on which, when his personal labours and excellences are forgotten, his fame with posterity will chiefly rest. At the close of 1827, he was elected Head Master of Rugby School, solely on account of the weight of the testimonials to his character and powers which were laid before the trustees. From this period to the close of his career, his duties as a teacher occupied the chief portion of his time and thoughts. Into this part of his life, however, it is not our intention to enter. The services which he rendered both to Rugby and to the cause of public education generally, are now fully acknowledged, and cannot probably be too highly estimated. "Not so much among his own pupils, nor in the actual scene of his labours, as in every public school throughout England, is to be sought the chief and enduring monument of Dr. Arnold's Head-Mastership at Rugby."

One of the subjects most constantly before Dr. Arnold's mind, and most deeply interesting to his feelings—so much so as to engross nearly two-thirds of his correspondence—was, the purification of "The Church;" the restoration of its true idea. The topic was one which seemed actually to *haunt* him for many years of his life. We are, however, obliged to confess that we have been unable—probably the fault is our own—to gather from the whole of his writings any very clear or consistent conception of his meaning. When we find him saying, (Life, vol. ii. p. 65.), "The scripture notion of a Church is, a Religious Society that should help a man to become better and holier, just as civil society helps us in civilisation," we have a simple and distinct definition. But when we find him again (Sermons, vol. iv. p. 210.) speaking of "Christ and his very mystical body, the

Church," we are thrown as much into the dark as ever.* In some passages (vol. ii. p. 60. and elsewhere) he speaks of the Church as "a most divine institution," and "one of the most efficient instruments of moral and spiritual improvement." In others he declares that, "supposing a young man to set seriously to work to turn to God and study the Scriptures, *it is clear that all this stuff about the true Church* would never come into his head;" and he asks (vol. ii. p. 67.), "Does our Lord, or do his Apostles, encourage the notion of salvation through the Church? Or would any human being ever collect such a notion from the Scriptures?"

Two points, however, were so perfectly clear to his own mind that he had no difficulty in making them clear to his readers, viz. that the Church at present is most deplorably corrupt, and that the idea, or rather the institution, of the priesthood, is the cause of its corruption. "The more I think of the matter (he writes, vol. i. p. 46.), and the more I read of the Scriptures themselves, and of the History of the Church, the more intense is my wonder at the language of admiration with which some men speak of the Church of England, which certainly retains the foundations sure, as all other Christian societies do, except the Unitarians, but has overlaid it with a very sufficient quantity of hay and stubble, which I devoutly hope to see one day burnt in the fire." So strong indeed was his conviction of the thorough corruption of the English establishment, and its unsuitability to its work, that he thus records (vol. i.

* "Now, the true and grand idea of a Church, that is a society for the purpose of making men like Christ, earth like heaven, the kingdoms of the world the kingdom of Christ, is all lost; and men look upon it as an institution for religious instruction and worship, thus robbing it of its life and universality; making it an affair of clergy, not of people; of preaching and ceremonies, not of living." — Vol. ii. p. 15.

p. 287.) his deliberate opinion of its hopeless doom: "The Church, as it now stands, no human power can save." *

The true end of the Church he maintained to be the putting down of moral evil; its true nature, not an institution of the clergy, but a living society of all Christians; and "it was as annihilating what he believed to be the apostolical idea of a Church, that he felt so strongly hostile to that principle of separation between the clergy and laity, which he used to denounce under the name of priestcraft." (Vol. i. p. 204.) His abhorrence of the priesthood breaks out almost in every page of his correspondence. Thus (vol. ii. p. 59.) he says: "Every part of the New Testament negatively confutes the priestcraft heresy, because that is to be found nowhere, insomuch that no man ever yet fell, or could fall, into that heresy by studying the Scriptures." Again (vol. ii. p. 60.): "My abhorrence of the priestcraft and succession doctrines (I do not mean that they are synonymous) is grounded on my firm conviction that they are and ever have been a most formidable device of the great enemy to destroy the real living Church. . . . And in this sense, so far as Popery is priestcraft, I do believe it to be the very mystery of iniquity."—"That the Church system, or rather the priest system, is not to be found in Scripture, is as certain as that the worship of Jupiter is not the doctrine of the Gospel."—*Life*, vol. ii. p. 256.

* The following expressions regarding the English Church are unhappily too just, but would have been considered shocking if they had proceeded from any one but a clergyman. He speaks of "the fanaticism which has been the peculiar disgrace of the Church of England"—a dress, a ritual, a name, a ceremony, a technical phraseology,—the superstition of a priesthood without its power,—the form of episcopal government without its substance,—a system imperfect and paralysed, not independent, not sovereign,—objects so pitiful, that if gained ever so completely, they would make no man the wiser or better; they would lead to no good, intellectual, moral, or spiritual.—*Life*, vol. ii. p. 5.

The following passage (the last we shall cite on this subject) is worthy of attention, as showing how utterly his opinions, as to the clerical profession, were at variance with those ordinarily received:—

“In your letter of the 2nd of August, you ask whether I think that a Christian ministry is of divine appointment? Now I cannot conceive any Church existing without public prayer, preaching, and communion; and some must minister in these offices. But that these ‘some’ should be always the same persons,—that they should form a distinct profession, and, following no other calling, should be maintained by the Church, I do not think to be of divine appointment, but I think it highly expedient that it should be so.”—Vol. ii. p. 275.

Many of Dr. Arnold's letters, and some of his more deliberate writings, are devoted to the elucidation of his peculiar views, touching the union between Church and State. He deprecated the separation of the two as one of the worst evils that could befall the community; while, at the same time, he abjured the idea of a formal alliance between them. He conceived that the State should be itself *the Church*—*i. e.* a society of Christian men, guided by Christian principles, and bound together not merely by community of worldly interest, still less by community of doctrinal views, but by *community of obedience*, by allegiance to one common spiritual master:—

“It was then only,” says Mr. Stanley (vol. i. p. 207.), “that he conceived the possibility of a full development of the Church, or a full Christianisation of the State, when the Church should have become, not a subordinate, but a sovereign society; not acting indirectly on the world through inferior instruments, but directly through its own government, the supreme legislature,—when all public officers of the State, feeling themselves to be necessarily officers of the Church, should endeavour, each in his vocation and ministry, to serve its great cause, not with a subject's indifference, but with a citizen's zeal,—when the jealousy with which the clergy and laity at present regard each other's interference, would be lost in the sense that their spheres

were, in fact, the same; that nothing was too secular to claim exemption from the enforcement of Christian duty,—nothing too spiritual to claim exemption from the control of the government of a Christian state,—when the whole nation, amidst much variety of form, ceremonial, and opinion, should yet feel that the great ends of Christian and national society, now for the first time realised to their view, were a far stronger bond of union between Christians, and a far deeper division from those who were not Christians, than any subordinate principle, either of agreement or separation.”—Vol. i. p. 208.

From this idea of the real essence of a Church, he derived the application to religious establishments of those sound and simple principles of justice which so distinguish him from his clerical brethren, and which raised against him such a storm of indignation when he first ventured to promulgate them. To us they appear so unquestionable and so obviously clear, that nothing but the inveterate habit which has so long and so mischievously prevailed, of applying one standard of morality to Church matters, and another to the world at large, could ever have obscured them. Assuming the propriety and advisability of an establishment (in which he firmly believed), Dr. Arnold held that justice requires us, either to establish the Church of the majority, or so to extend the basis, and open the arms, of our establishment, as to embrace the majority within its pale. Thus he concludes that we must establish the Catholic religion in Ireland; and that in England we must either so enlarge and liberalise the Church as to include the great body of the Dissenters, or give up the establishment entirely:—

“The Established Church is only the religion of a part of the nation, and there is the whole difficulty. The Reformers, or rather their successors, in Elizabeth's time, wished to root out dissent by the strong hand. This was foolish, I think, as well as wicked: but then, if we do not root out dissent, and so keep the establishment co-extensive with the nation, we must extend

the establishment ; or else, in the end, there will and ought to be no establishment at all, which I consider as one of the greatest of all evils. . . . *Either the Church must be more comprehensive, or if this be impracticable, then an establishment cannot be maintained :* and the next best thing will be to take care that all the Church property is applied to strictly public purposes, to schools, hospitals, almshouses, or something of the sort, and that it is not stolen by the landlords. For the only possible way in which there can be a robbery of public property, is to transfer it to private uses.”—*Life*, vol. ii. pp. 16—68.

In writing to the Archbishop of Dublin, he says—

“ I know full well that my principles would lead to the establishment of the Roman Catholic religion in three-fourths of Ireland.”—Vol. i. p. 335.

And again, to another friend—

“ The Christian people of Ireland, *i. e.* in my sense of the word, the Church of Ireland, have a right to the full benefit of their Church property, which now they cannot have, because Protestant clergyman they will not listen to. I think then that it ought to furnish them with Catholic clergymen. (Vol. ii. p. 334.) Whether Ireland remain in its present barbarism, or grow in health and civilisation, *in either case the downfall of the present establishment is certain :* a savage people will not endure the insult of a hostile religion ; a civilised one will reasonably insist on having their own.”—Vol. i. p. 21.

In one point especially these volumes are peculiarly interesting, and to the world at large may be peculiarly useful. They afford a most instructive picture of the utmost efforts of a most excellent heart and a most vigorous understanding to be at once orthodox and liberal, and of the utter failure of those efforts. The “ *Life* ” abounds in instances of the perplexities and (what seem to us) the inconsistencies in which Dr. Arnold was perpetually involved by this attempt “ to fill his cup at the same time at the mouth, and at the source, of the Nile,” to reconcile two conditions in their very nature incompatible. Generally speaking, he pre-

served his liberality at the expense of his orthodoxy. Sometimes, though rarely, he trenched upon his liberality to maintain the orthodoxy of his opinions.

The essence of liberality of mind in matters of religion, we conceive to consist in the belief, and the practical *feeling*, that conscientious differences of opinion, however we may deplore them as intellectual errors, are not to be regarded as moral faults,—ought in no degree to affect our estimate of a man's character, virtue, or acceptability to Him who “seeth not as man seeth.” To believe our own doctrines to be true, and the opposite doctrines to be erroneous, is the nature of strong conviction. To believe that those who hold the opposite doctrines with sincerity will be punished for so doing, is bigotry, and we believe it to be sin, because we hold it to be the dictate—however unconsciously—of an unchristian spirit. Now both the humility and the innate justice of Dr. Arnold's mind naturally disposed him to liberality in its widest signification; but his Church creed stood sadly in his way. In early life he appears to have met with a good deal of intolerance even from his most intimate friends, and complains of it in language which shows that he clearly saw wherein its injustice and unworthiness consisted. To one friend we find him expressing his—

“Fear that those engaged in the same great cause will never heartily sink their little differences of opinion, when I find that you, who have known me so long, cannot hear them without thinking them not merely erroneous, but morally wrong, and such, therefore, as to give you pain when uttered. I am not going to renew the argument; it is very likely that I was wrong in it; and I am sure it would not annoy me that you should think me so, just as I think you wrong in any point, or as I think J. Keble wrong in half a hundred, yet without being grieved that he should hold them, that is, *grieved as at a fault*.”—Vol. i. p. 69.

A few years later he writes to the Rev. J. Hearn:—

"It grieves me more than I can say, to find so much intolerance; by which I mean over-estimating our points of difference, and under-estimating our points of agreement. I am by no means indifferent to truth and error, and hold my own opinions as decidedly as any man; which of course implies a conviction that the opposite opinions are erroneous. In many cases, I think them not only erroneous, but mischievous; still they exist in men whom I know to be thoroughly in earnest, fearing God, and loving Christ; and it seems to me a waste of time, which we can ill afford, and a sort of quarrel 'by the way,' which our Christian vow of enmity against moral evil makes utterly unseasonable, when Christians suspend their great business and loosen the bond of their union with each other, by venting fruitless regret and complaints against one another's errors, instead of labouring to lessen one another's sins."—*Life*, vol. i. p. 303.

The following sentence, addressed to the same correspondent, contains the whole creed of genuine liberality:—

"Of course he who believes his own views to be true, must believe the opposite views to be in error; but the great point, in our judgment and feelings towards men, seems to be *not to confound error with fault*."—Vol. ii. p. 265.*

This charity towards the holders of opposite opinions, which Dr. Arnold claimed for himself, he fully exercised towards others, with few and rare exceptions.† It was

* What a sad and unworthy qualification of this true and charitable sentiment, immediately follows! It really comes upon us with as painful a shock as a blow from one we had regarded as a bosom friend. He continues:—"We are speaking, you will observe, of *such errors as are consistent with membership, not only in Christianity, but in the same particular Church!*"

† We regret to notice *one* signal exception. Dr. Arnold says (vol. ii. p. 180.)—"Bentham I have always thought a bad man, and also, as Carlyle called him, a bore of the first magnitude." We can scarcely conceive this to have been a deliberately formed opinion. Arnold and Bentham differed on many most important points, but both pursued one common object—the improvement of their fellow men—

when he came to consider the case of the Unitarians, that he found the greatest difficulty in reconciling the large charity of an honest, humble, and expansive mind with the intolerant narrowness of an orthodox creed. The doctrine of the Church of England, to which Dr. Arnold belonged, is, upon this point, insolently explicit. It declares not only that the Unitarians are not Christians, but that, "without doubt they shall perish everlastingly." Dr. Arnold was too good a man to hold such language, or cordially accept such views; but in 1829 he writes thus to the parent of one of his pupils, who belonged to that denomination (vol. i. p. 234.):—

"My difficulty with your son is not one which I feel as a Churchman, but as a Christian; and goes only on this simple principle, that I feel bound to teach the essentials of Christianity to all those committed to my care—and with these the tenets of the Unitarians alone, among all the Dissenters in the kingdom, are in my judgment irreconcilable."

A few years later, however, he has discovered how inconsistent any such exclusion is with the genuine

with equal zeal and equal sincerity; and this consideration alone should have insured a more charitable judgment. Few men ever existed to whom the epithet, *bad*, could with less justice be applied. Through the whole of a long life he laboured assiduously to promote those public objects which he considered most conducive to the social elevation of mankind, amid much obloquy, and many sacrifices. This was, however, we trust, only a momentary lapse into uncharitableness on Dr. Arnold's part. His habitual sentiments towards such heretical fellow-labourers as Bentham, is thus beautifully expressed (vol. i. p. 76.):—

"My feeling towards men whom I believe to be sincere lovers of truth and the happiness of their fellow-creatures, while they seek those ends otherwise than through the medium of the Gospel, is rather that they are not far from the kingdom of God, and might be brought into it altogether, than that they are enemies whose views are directly opposed to our own. That they are not brought into it is, I think, chargeable to a considerable degree upon the professors of Christianity."

principles of liberality, and he unreservedly admits (vol. ii. p. 78.) that —

“A Unitarian, as such, is a Christian; that is, if a man follows Christ's law, and believes his words according to his conscientious sense of their meaning, he is a Christian; and though I may think that he understands Christ's words amiss, *yet that is a question of interpretation, and no more*; the purpose of his heart and mind is to obey and be guided by Christ, and therefore he is a Christian.”

He repeats the same conviction (vol. i. p. 314.). After expressing his belief that, “If we could get rid of the Athanasian Creed, many good Unitarians would find a stumbling-block removed out of their path,” he proceeds thus : —

“But whatever they may think of his nature, I never meant to deny the name of Christian to those who truly love and fear him; and though I think it is the tendency of Unitarianism to lessen this love and fear, yet I doubt not that many Unitarians feel it notwithstanding, and thus he is their Saviour, and they are his people.”

In such passages as these there is assuredly much Christianity but little orthodoxy.*

* In one of Dr. Arnold's letters to a Unitarian is a passage which can scarcely fail to suggest some remarkable reflections.

“For my own part (he says), considering one great object of God's revealing himself in the person of Christ to be furnishing us with an object of worship which we could at once love and understand; or, in other words, the supplying safely and wholesomely that want in human nature which has shown itself in false religions, in making gods after its own devices, it does seem to me to be forfeiting the peculiar benefits thus offered, if we persist in approaching God in his own incomprehensible essence, which, as no man has seen, or can see, — so no man can conceive it,” &c. &c. — Vol. i. p. 314.

We have here, we believe, a suggestion of the true source of the origin and prevalence of the Trinitarian doctrine, — of that portion of it at least which affirms the divinity of Christ, — a suggestion of the real cause, that is, not of its revelation by God, but of its adoption by man. The plain English of the passage we have quoted seems to be,

The rectitude of Dr. Arnold's understanding, and the kindness of his feelings, enabled him to seize firm hold of that noble, light-giving, purifying, pacifying

that the Deity—finding “the want in human nature” (a propensity arising out of its weakness) of some corporeal and sensible object of adoration to be unconquerable and incurable, supplied it with such a corporeal object in the person of Christ. Now we know that the chief aim of the whole theocratic polity of the Hebrews (a comparatively barbarous tribe) was to separate and preserve a peculiar people as worshippers of one spiritual and unseen God, the exclusive and *unrepresented* adoration of whom was enjoined with the most rigid severity; and it is inconceivable that this aim should have been abandoned, and a visible and human object of worship permitted to a subsequent and cultivated race, unless on the monstrous supposition (which Dr. A. seems unconsciously to adopt) that the Deity had discovered his previous aim to be unattainable!—that, finding he had set human nature too hard a task, he had compassionately remitted it in a subsequent communication. Dr. A.'s conception that God, after having in the first instance revealed the sublime doctrine of a pure theism, should, in a subsequent revelation, have taught a theism less pure,—should have retrograded from the perfect to the imperfect,—seems most astounding and wholly inadmissible.¹ To a philosophical inquirer there will appear little doubt that Trinitarianism and Idolatry—the worship of Christ as God, the worship of saints, and the worship by the Israelites of the Golden Calf, have one common origin—viz. the weakness of human imagination, and the unspirituality of human intellect. The suggestions contained in the following remarkable passage strongly confirm this view:—

“Logicians may reason about abstractions: but the great mass of mankind must have images. The strong tendency of the multitude in all ages and nations to idolatry can be explained on no other principle. The first inhabitants of Greece, there is every reason to believe, worshipped one invisible Deity: but the necessity of having something more definite to adore produced, in a few centuries, the innumerable crowd of gods and goddesses. In like manner the ancient Persians thought it impious to exhibit the Creator under a human form; yet even these transferred to the sun the worship which, in speculation, they considered due only to the Supreme Mind. The history

¹ To accept the orthodox view of the Christian revelation is to our apprehension to deny the divine origin of the Jewish revelation.

truth, which strikes at the root of all dogmatic theology, — that *unity of spirit* not *uniformity of doctrine*, is the object to be desired by Christian citizens; that the first is attainable, and worth any price to attain; that the second is unattainable, and that the attempt to attain it hinders the achievement of the first: —

“It was as frustrating the union of all Christians, in accomplishing what he believed to be the true, and enjoined by their common master, that he felt so strongly against the desire for uniformity of opinion or worship, which he used to denounce under the name of *sectarianism*.” — Vol. i. p. 204.

In writing to the Rev. Julius Hare, a kindred spirit and worthy coadjutor, he says —

“These are matters particular, but all bearing upon the great philosophical and Christian truth, *which seems to me the very*

of the Jews is the record of a continual struggle between pure theism supported by the most terrible sanctions, and the strangely fascinating desire of having some visible and tangible object of adoration. Perhaps none of the secondary causes which Gibbon has assigned for the rapidity with which Christianity has spread over the world, while Judaism scarcely ever acquired a proselyte, operated more powerfully than this feeling. God, the uncreated, the incomprehensible, the invisible, attracted few worshippers. A philosopher might adore so noble a conception; but the crowd turned away in disgust from words which presented no image to their minds. It was before Deity embodied in a human form, walking among men, partaking of their infirmities, leaning on their bosoms, weeping over their graves, slumbering in the manger, bleeding on the cross, that the prejudices of the synagogue, and the doubts of the academy, and the pride of the portico, and the fasces of the lictor, and the swords of thirty legions, were humbled in the dust. Soon after Christianity had achieved its triumph, the principle which had assisted it began to corrupt it. It became a new Paganism. Patron saints assumed the offices of household gods. The Virgin Mother and St. Cecilia succeeded to Venus and the Muses. The fascination of sex and loveliness was again joined to that of celestial dignity; and the homage of chivalry was blended with that of religion.” — *Macaulay's Essays*, vol. i. 22. See also “Palm Leaves,” by R. M. Milnes, — preface, xxxi. and p. 22.

*truth of truths, that Christian unity, and the perfection of Christ's Church, are independent of theological articles of opinion**; consisting in a certain moral state, and moral and religious affections, which have existed in good Christians of all ages and all communions, along with an infinitely varying proportion of truth and error (vol. i. p. 359). My own firm belief is that every difference of opinion among Christians is either remediable by time and mutual fairness, or else is indifferent."—Vol. ii. p. 17.

We would wish especially to call the attention of those who are fond of quoting passages of Scripture in justification of their own intolerance, to Dr. Arnold's view of the right interpretation of such passages:—

"I think you will find that all the 'false doctrines' spoken of by the Apostles, were doctrines of sheer wickedness; that their counterpart in modern times is to be found in the Anabaptists of Munster, or the fifth monarchy men, or in mere secular high churchmen, or hypocritical evangelicals,—in those who make Christianity minister to lust, to covetousness, or to ambition; not in those who interpret Scripture to the best of their conscience and ability, be their interpretation ever so erroneous."—Vol. i. p. 325.

It is delightful to be able to transcribe such sentiments as these from the writings of an English divine of such acknowledged eminence and unquestioned piety as Dr. Arnold. From so zealous a Trinitarian, and so competent a theologian, they come with a peculiar and almost solemn weight;—and, if we did not know how

* Dr. Arnold seems to have felt painfully the isolation in which his peculiar views placed him, but without having had any distinct conception of the exact point in them which caused the isolation. The fact was, that his postponement of *dogma* to *feeling*—the preference which he gave to the spirit of Christ over the spirit of Athanasius—placed a wide gulf between him and most of his orthodox brethren; while the only parties who agreed with him on this point, belonged to a sect whose speculative doctrines he held in especial abhorrence. He was separated from the Trinitarians by his Christian spirit; and from the Unitarians by his Christian creed.

much self-love and the love of power, and tempers impatient of contradiction and control, contribute both to originate and to maintain that mischievous craving after doctrinal agreement which has so long desolated Christendom, and desecrated Christianity,—such opinions, from such a quarter, would lead us to hope that the present generation might survive to hail the admission—at least among *thinkers*—that a man's views as to the doctrines of the Trinity or the Atonement no more affect the question of his virtue or his salvation, than his opinions as to the respective merits of the undulatory or the radiating theories of light. Till this admission is made, the intercourse between fellow-Christians will always be embittered by prejudice and passion; and the search after religious truth secularised and impeded by the intrusion of feelings and considerations wholly foreign to the matter.

And ought it to be so difficult to arrive at this admission? For what, after all, is the contrary tenet, when translated into plain and specific language, and divested of the misty confusion with which its votaries delight to veil its naked enormity, and without which veil themselves would shrink back in horror from the faithful mirror of their own opinion? To say that a man's salvation depends upon his reception of any given creed, is *not* to say (as generally argued) that it depends on his acceptance of the revealed word of God—of that which God has declared to be the truth,—for if God had declared that truth to him, or if he *knew* that God had declared it to any one, his rejection of it would be a mental impossibility, and would involve a contradiction in terms. But it is to say, that his salvation depends upon his drawing the same conclusion as to what *is* the truth of God—as to what God *has* declared to be the truth,—*as certain other parties have drawn*. In other words, it is for Peter Jackson to affirm that God will

punish John Smith with endless torments for differing in opinion with the said Peter Jackson on a matter offered to their common understanding. The orthodox will, we know, be shocked at this plain translation of their doctrine; but if this is *not* the simple and naked meaning of all damnatory clauses, then language has no fixed signification; and if this *is* their meaning, we ask, can vanity, can insolence, can blasphemy, go further?

We think it is scarcely an exaggeration to say, that in no country, and at no period, has dogmatic theology —(the principle, that is, of conceiving Christianity to consist in creed, and not in spirit — of conceiving correct opinions, not devotional feelings and virtuous practice, to be the one thing needful) — produced more frightful mischiefs than in England at the present day. In Italy it divided the thinking world into hypocrites and unbelievers; in France it sharpened the sword of civil war; in Spain it lighted the fires of the Inquisition; throughout Europe it sowed discord in every family, and separated chief friends: but in our own country, and in our own day, this same error has decreed that whole classes of the people of a great nation shall remain in a condition of the most perilous mental darkness, and the most disgraceful mental and spiritual degradation; that generation after generation of our countrymen shall pass through life in unreclaimed barbarism, and shall go down to the grave, having earned nothing but the wages of sin, rather than that dogmatic theology should descend from its place of pride. We are apt to declaim — and during the recent discussions on the subject, we did declaim most earnestly — against the bigoted spirit of those clergymen and churchmen who oppose, and, by their opposition, have prevented the adoption of a fair and sound system of national education, and especially of those who declare that there shall be no general education unless it be committed to the hands of the Church.

Their conduct is blameable, no doubt, and, in our view of it, absolutely atrocious ; but the fault lies, *not in the course of conduct they pursue, but in those dogmatic principles which make this course the only one which they can, with any logical consistency, pursue.* Those who believe, as every thorough-going churchman must believe (and *says* directly four times a year, and indirectly fifty-two times a year, that he does believe) that “ whoever will be saved, *before all things* it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith ” in all its severe particularity, must also believe it infinitely more important that a child should be taught that “ the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, and yet that there are not three Gods, but one God,” — than that he should be instructed in all branches of beautiful and useful knowledge, or brought up in the practice of all the personal, social, and domestic virtues. They must believe, likewise, that it is immeasurably better that he should be left to wallow in the filthiest abyss of vice, ignorance, and brutal sensualism, than that he should be rescued from all these at the price of learning, in his conception of the Trinity, “ either to confound the persons, or divide the substance.” They must believe that no career of hideous crime, how desperate and unrelieved soever, can so certainly compromise his eternal welfare, as if, by falling into the hands of a virtuous and charitable Unitarian, he should be taught — along with the deepest reverence for God, and the warmest affection for his neighbour — to reject the “ personality of the Holy Ghost,” or to believe in the “ creation of the Son,” — since in either of these cases “ without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.” Believing all this, and believing, moreover, that these doctrines, so essential to salvation, are taught in their purity and integrity by the Church alone, a consistent son of the Anglican establishment not only may, but *must*, maintain that it is better there

should be no system of education than one which should be conducted, even partially, by men holding, and therefore likely to inculcate, heretical and dangerous opinions. And we should quarrel, therefore, not with the conduct on this question which clergymen and churchmen have thought proper to pursue, but with the original dogmas which necessarily involve such conduct, and still more with the system which has given such power to the holders of such dogmas.

The simple truth is, that a liberal churchman (taking the articles and the liturgy as they now stand) is an anomaly. He stands in an untenable, an indefensible position. If he really hold the doctrines of his sect in sincerity, he can be liberal only at the expense of his consistency. There is no abyss of intolerance to which those doctrines do not logically lead. With us, however, the case is different. Conceiving that in all probability the creeds of all sects contain much speculative error, and that some of them embrace the gravest and saddest follies into which a bewildered fancy ever wandered, we believe at the same time, that upon all the blunders of our intellectual gropings after truth, God looks with a gentle and indulgent eye. If, therefore, we can teach the youth of this nation to "do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before God;" if we can bring them up to "love God with all their soul, and to love their neighbour as themselves;" if we can so instruct and guide them, that their practical religion shall be "to visit the fatherless and the widow in affliction, and to keep themselves unstained" amid the contaminations of an evil world, then we hold that whatever errors of theological opinion they may imbibe in the course of this ennobling and purifying process, are *comparatively* immaterial; and we know that we have ample Scripture warrant for these sentiments.

"Why, then," it will be asked, "do we object to the

education of the people being exclusively in the hands of the Church, if we hold errors of doctrine to be so comparatively unimportant?" We reply:—

I. Because in the midst of these doctrines there is a pervading spirit of intolerant dogmatism which belongs to the department, not of speculative error, but of moral guilt; which implies something wrong, not only in the head, but in the heart. The doctrine that "the true faith is, that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity," may be true, or may be false, but if an error, is an error of opinion only. The doctrine that "he that will be saved must think thus of the Trinity," is an error of the heart. The former, if erroneous, implies merely obliquity of mental vision: the latter involves a criminal insolence of feeling, and something approaching to blasphemous intrusion on a sacred province.

II. Because the dogmatic theology of the Church, if thoroughly and consistently inculcated, could not, without creating a mischievous degree of perplexity and confusion in the mind of the scholar, be placed in juxtaposition with those passages and that pervading spirit of Christian Scripture, which place the essence of religion in those virtues of piety, self-denial, gentleness, humility, and charity, which are of vital moment both to social happiness and national prosperity.

III. Because we believe (and history warrants us in saying that the belief is not uncharitable) that to deliver the education of the people into the hands of the clergy, would be to deliver it into the hands of its greatest enemies. The clergy, if sincere in their doctrines, and wise in their generation, cannot wish to bestow a really sound and thorough education on the great mass of the community. They cannot but be aware (and their uniform conduct has shown that they *are* aware) that the general enlightenment which would

follow such genuine education would be fatal to many of their pretensions, and to much of their power. The mission of the Church is the dissemination of *opinion*, not the diffusion of knowledge. The object of education is the imparting of knowledge, and the cultivation of virtue, not the inculcation of opinion. The object of the clergyman and the schoolmaster is therefore vitally distinct. And we entertain no doubt whatever, that if national education were confided altogether to the clergy, they would make it (and on their own principles would be bound to make it), as they have avowedly, and by name, made the so-called "National Schools," a system simply for bringing up the people "in the doctrines of the Established Church."

In truth, the views of the Church and of the State on the subject of popular education are of necessity dissimilar. The object of the Church is to have a body of humble, docile, undoubting, unsearching catechumens, free from all taint of heretical opinion, well-grounded in the dogmas of the catechism and the liturgy, and with as little knowledge of any interfering kind as possible. The object of the State is to have a body of citizens, sober and industrious, and with an intelligence sufficiently cultivated to enable them to exercise their industry to the best advantage; submissive to legitimate government, because well-informed as to the true grounds of authority and the obligations of obedience; peaceful and charitable, because they know that peace and charity are not only the duties of Christian men, but lie at the very foundations of social well-being; and with their reasoning powers improved and directed by careful and judicious culture, that they may comprehend the causes which affect the national prosperity, and may aid them as they have ability and opportunity. The State wants good citizens. The Church wants good churchmen. The two objects may not be incompatible,

but assuredly they must be achieved by different machinery; nor can either object be safely intrusted to those who consider the other object paramount in importance.

To return from this digression. Dr. Arnold having lapsed into the noble and prolific heresy of liberality towards men of opposite opinions, we shall not be surprised to find him wandering from the received standard of orthodoxy in several minor points.

"They (*i. e.* other sects) are not all error, nor we all truth; *e. g.* the Quakers reject the Communion of the Lord's Supper, thereby losing a great means of grace. But are they not tempted to do so by the superstitions which other Christians have heaped upon the institution? and is there not some taint of these in the exhortation even in our own Communion Service? And, with regard to the greatest truths of all, you know how Pelagianism and Calvinism have encouraged each other; and how the Athanasian Creed at this day confirms and aggravates the evils of Unitarianism."—Vol. i. p. 289.

To a former pupil, who had written to him for his opinion on the subject, he replies:—

"I do *not* believe the damnatory clauses in the Athanasian Creed, under any qualification given to them, except such as would substitute for them propositions of a wholly different character."—Vol. i. p. 120.

"But," he goes on to say, "I read the Athanasian Creed, and have, and would again subscribe the article about it, because I do not conceive the clauses in question to be essential parts of it, or that they were retained deliberately by our Reformers after the propriety of retaining or expunging them had been distinctly submitted to their minds. . . . Nor do I think that the Reformers, or the best and wisest men of the Church since, would have objected to any man's subscription, if they had conceived such a case, but would have said: 'What we mean you to embrace is the belief of the general Church, as expressed in the three creeds with regard to the points—many of them having been much disputed—on which those creeds pronounce.

The degree of blameableness in those who do not embrace this belief is another matter, *on which we do not intend to speak particularly (!) in this article.*"—Vol. ii. p. 121.

Dr. Arnold "does not think there is anything evasive or unfair in this." Of course he did not. We are so convinced of the unflinching integrity of his character, that we feel sure he would have cut off his right hand rather than have knowingly descended to any unworthy quibbling or evasion on so high a matter. Yet, the 8th article says that this creed "ought to be *thoroughly* received and believed;" and nothing can be more certain than that the damnatory clauses are not mere extraneous additions, but integral portions of it, fully incorporated into it. They are five in number: two in the beginning, two in the middle, and one at the end; a kind of Parthian kick of the charitable divine, whoever he may be, to whom it is to be attributed. Nor will history in the least bear out Dr. Arnold's supposition, that those who inserted this creed into our liturgy, "did not intend particularly" to damn those who reject it. We know that many of them were men to whose dogmatising and unchastened spirits such unchristian denunciations of antagonists would be particularly consonant, and who would be apt to regard them as the cream and jewel of the whole. But the conclusion which all this forces on our own minds, and which we wish, even at the hazard of repetition, to impress upon our readers, is that the dogmatic theology of our Church constantly drives its members into dilemmas, in which they must either sacrifice their orthodoxy to preserve their Christianity, or have recourse to explanatory subterfuges which, in any other science, could only be described as tampering with conscience and with truth.

On the subject of subscription to the articles,—that perpetual stumbling-block and cause of offence to tender consciences and honest minds, which our Church has

placed upon her very threshold, as if to make a sacrifice of intellectual integrity, and a stain upon intellectual nobleness, indispensable conditions for entering therein — Dr. Arnold adopted the laxer interpretation ; and he defends this interpretation chiefly (it is worthy of note) *because on no other interpretation could able and honourable men enter upon the clerical profession.*

“ I have been satisfied for many years—and wonder almost that I could ever have been otherwise—that ordination was never meant to be closed against those who, having been conscientious members of the Church before, and wishing in earnest to be ministers of the Church now, holding its truths, and sympathising in its spirit, yet cannot yield an active belief to the words of every part of the articles and liturgy as true, without qualification or explanation. I think so on historical as well as *à priori* grounds. . . . *A whole Church can never be expected to agree in the absolute truth of such a number of propositions as are contained in the articles and liturgy.* This consideration seems to me decisive also on *à priori* grounds. *For otherwise the Church could by necessity receive into the ministry only men of dull consciences or dull minds ;— of dull, nay almost of dishonest minds, if they can persuade themselves that they actually agree in every minute particular with any great number of human propositions ; of dull consciences, if exercising their minds freely, and yet believing that the Church requires the total adhesion of the understanding, they still, for considerations of their own convenience, enter into the ministry in her despite.*”— Vol. i. p. 172.

What stronger condemnation of the system of our Church ever proceeded from her bitterest antagonists ? For what is this but to declare that the Church *cannot* require what she affirms that she *does* require : that she cannot *mean* what she *says* ; because if she did, *certain absurd and mischievous consequences would ensue ?* Why, the certainty of these absurd and mischievous consequences is the very reason why she *ought not* to require what she *does* require, and to say what she *does say*.

We pass over many opinions on a variety of topics, which we should have wished to quote, both for the sake of the authority they would carry with them, as well as to show how far Dr. Arnold's mind had shaken off the trammels of a strict and narrow orthodoxy, to call attention to his views on a subject, regarding which much misconception and much culpable intolerance prevail — the due observance of the Sabbath: —

“My conclusion is,” he writes to his sister, vol. i. p. 320., “that whilst St. Paul on the one hand would have been utterly shocked, could he have foreseen that eighteen hundred years after Christianity had been in the world, such an institution as the Sabbath would have been needed, yet that seeing it is still needed, the obligation of the old commandment is still binding in the spirit of it; that is, that we should use one day in seven as a sort of special reminder of our duties, and a relieving ourselves from the over-pressure of worldly things, which daily life brings with it. But our Sunday is the beginning of the week, not the end; a day of preparation and strengthening for the week to come, not of rest for the past; and in *this* sense the old Christians kept it, because it was the day on which God *began* his work of creation; so little did they think that they had anything to do with the old Jewish Sabbath.”

To a gentleman who had requested him to support a resolution against Sunday travelling by railway, he writes thus (vol. ii. p. 198.): —

“Of course, if I held the Jewish law of the Sabbath to be binding upon us, the question would not be one of degree, but I should wish to stop all travelling on Sundays, as in itself unlawful. But holding that the Christian's Lord's day is a very different thing from the Sabbath, and to be observed in a different manner, the question of Sunday travelling is in my mind quite one of degree; and whilst I entirely think that the trains which travel on that day should be very much fewer on every account, yet I could not consent to suspend all travelling on a great line of communication for twenty-four hours, especially as the creation of railways necessarily puts an end to other conveyances in the same direction: and if the trains do not travel,

a poor man, who could not post, might find it impossible to get on at all. . . . That the Christian Sunday should be a day of greater leisure than other days, and of the suspension, so far as may be, of the common business of life, I quite allow ; but then I believe that I should have a much greater indulgence for recreation on a Sunday than you might have ; and *if the railway enables the people in the great towns to get out into the country on a Sunday, I should think it a very great good.* I confess I would rather have one train going on a Sunday, than none at all."— Vol. i. p. 201.

We now take our leave of Dr. Arnold as a theologian. But he was also a citizen, and as such took the deepest interest in all the public events with which the period of his life was so thickly crowded. His concern for the social evils of the country was so vivid and profound, as materially to impair his private happiness, and to sadden his ordinarily joyous spirits. (Vol. i. p. 275.) His sympathy was with *the people* ; he felt strongly the deep arrears of debt due by the higher classes to the poorer, whose sufferings their selfishness and neglect have so much contributed to produce and aggravate ; and he saw clearly the tremendous peril of leaving such evils unredressed. "The disorders in our social state (he writes to his friend Bunsen, in 1834) appear to me to continue unabated ; and you know what trifles mere political grievances are compared to these." And to another friend he says : —

"The subject haunts me, I may almost say, night and day. It fills me with astonishment to see anti-slavery and missionary societies so busy with the ends of the earth, and yet all the worst evils of slavery and heathenism are existing among ourselves. . . . My fear with regard to every remedy that involves any sacrifice to the upper classes is, that the public mind is not yet enough aware of the magnitude of the evil to submit to them."— Vol. i. p. 131.

His views of the real wants and requirements of the poor were sensible and correct to a degree which it is

rare to find among those who have mixed so little with them.

"It seems to me," he writes in 1839, "that people are not enough aware of the monstrous state of society, absolutely without a parallel in the history of the world, with a population poor, miserable, and degraded in body and mind as much as if they were slaves, and yet called free-men, and having power as such of concerting and combining plans of risings, which makes them ten times more dangerous than slaves. And *the hopes entertained by many of the effects to be wrought by new churches and schools, while the social evils of their condition are left uncorrected, appear to me utterly wild.*"—Vol. ii. p. 57.

To the Chevalier Bunsen he says (vol. ii. p. 351.): "Education is wanted to improve the physical condition of the people; and yet *their physical condition must be improved before they can be susceptible of education.*" There is deep wisdom in these sentences; and they convey at once an answer and a reproof to those who blame the economists and other friends of the people for attaching too much weight to the supply of their mere material necessities and comforts. For ourselves, we can say that we attach such vast importance to the diffusion of sound principles of commercial and political economy, not mainly because on them depends the development of industry, and the due reward of the industrious,—not mainly because they are inextricably interwoven with our national pre-eminence, with the extension of our trade, and the feeding of our famished people; but because we believe that deeper interests than those of mere material well-being are bound up in their adoption; because we believe that a vast part—far the greater part—of the moral and social degradation which so disfigures and disgraces England, arises from the physical destitution brought about by our restrictive laws; because we know that good food is a necessary portion and preliminary of a good education,

and that you cannot make a wise and virtuous people out of a starving people.* We have seen much of the working classes; we have seen a good deal of the efforts made to ameliorate their condition and amend their character; and we know that the hopeless misery, the *enforced* and *inescapable* destitution too often prevalent among them, is the rock upon which all these efforts have been wrecked. You cannot speak of intellectual pleasures to a man who is hungering for his daily bread; you cannot speak of virtue and forbearance to a man who has had no breakfast, and expects no supper; you cannot, for very shame, preach patience to a man whose children are clamouring around him for the food *of which your laws have robbed him*; you cannot urge a scrupulous regard for the rights and property of others, upon men whose own rights and whose own property have been so shamelessly disregarded and trampled down: at least, if you do preach all this, you do it with an uneasy consciousness that you are requiring from the poor and the oppressed an effort of virtue far above the capacity of the wealthy and the powerful. There are strange inconsistencies in the human intellect and heart: perhaps we all partake of them, and should, therefore, speak of them with leniency in others. But of all those strange and irreconcilable anomalies which make wise men wonder, and good men weep, the saddest and the strangest seems to us that exhibited by philanthropists like Lord Ashley, who lament the degraded condition of large bodies of our working classes, and yet do their utmost to preserve and perpetuate those very laws from which that degradation springs; who, in one and the same session, pass laws to educate the people, and to starve the

* It was well said by a German writer (Isaak Iselin)—“One solitary philosopher may be great, virtuous, and happy, in the depth of poverty; but not a whole people.”

people; and yet cannot see, or will not see, that they are doing far more mischief with one hand than they can undo with the other. Now we know how easily even good men can deceive themselves, and therefore we do not stigmatise these men as hypocrites; we believe that many of them are sincere in wishing to improve the condition of the people, *but they are not willing to pay the necessary price*, and they wish to effect their object at the expense of others, rather than at their own. They want to do that which their religion tells them is impossible, which even the privileged orders are not privileged to do — they want to serve God and Mammon. They wish to unite the pleasures of benevolence with the profits of oppression. They desire to combine the “luxury of doing good” with the emolument of doing evil.

We wish for the triumph of a free commercial policy rather as philanthropists than as economists. We wish for it, not only because it is identified with those eternal laws of justice which ought everywhere to be the pervading principles of action, but because it will prepare the way, by the spread of physical comfort among the people, for the seeds of higher and worthier attainments; because we see in that triumph a prospect, and the only prospect, for the realisation of those noble plans of social happiness and virtue, to have contributed to which, even the widow's mite is enough for the ambition of the most aspiring, and should be our sufficient, if our sole, reward.

The opinions of Dr. Arnold on the general principles of politics acquire peculiar interest from the circumstance that they were not derived from, nor linked with, adhesion to any party, but were the deliberate, scientific deductions of a mind profoundly versed in the rich stores of historical wisdom; and endowed with

that unrivalled instrument of clear vision, an invincible love of justice. He regarded the laws of political science as the main lesson to be learned from history, "the desire of taking an active share in the great work of government, the highest earthly desire of the ripened mind." The general nature of his views may be stated in two words:— he was the disciple and the apostle of progress as opposed to stagnation; in other words, he was essentially a liberal, a reformer,— however, on points of application, he might differ from the parties who usually usurp those epithets. Conservatism he abhorred, both as ruinous and unchristian:—

"There is nothing," he says, vol. i. p. 259., "so revolutionary, because there is nothing so unnatural and so convulsive to society, as the strain to keep things fixed, when all the world is, by the very law of its creation, in eternal progress; and the cause of all the evils of the world may be traced to that natural, but most deadly error, of human indolence and corruption,—that our business is to preserve, and not to improve. It is the ruin of us all alike, individuals, schools, and nations."

And again (vol. i. p. 365.):—

"The real parties in human nature are the conservatives and the advancers; those who look to the past or present, and those who look to the future. . . . Thus conservatism may sometimes be ultra-democracy (see Cleon's speech in Thucydides, iii.), sometimes aristocracy, as in the civil wars of Rome, or in the English constitution now; and the advance may be sometimes despotism, sometimes aristocracy, but always keeping its essential character of advance, of taking off bonds, removing prejudices, altering what is existing. The advance, in its perfect form, is Christianity, and, in a corrupted world, must always be the true principle."*

We must hasten to a close. The predominant characteristic of Dr. Arnold's mind, and that for which

* "Cobbett was an anti-advance man to the back bone; he is sometimes jacobin, sometimes conservative, but never liberal."— Vol. i. p. 366.

above all others we honour him, was his *earnestness*. The idea conveyed by the motto from Schiller, which Carlyle has prefixed to his "Past and Present" — *ernst ist das leben* — seems to have been, in all its magnificent meaning, perpetually present to his thoughts. Life, in his view of it, was no pilgrimage of pleasure, but a scene of toil, of effort, of appointed work, of grand purposes to be striven for, of vast ends to be achieved, of fearful evils to be uprooted or trampled down, of sacred and mighty principles to be asserted and carried out. "I always think," he used to say, "of that magnificent sentence of Bacon, 'In this world God only, and the angels, may be spectators.'" Politics was *not* in his conception, as it is in that of too many of our leading statesmen, a game to be played with more or less of skill, more or less of consistency, more or less of reward from popular plaudits, or the substantial emoluments of office; but a science, on the thorough knowledge and right appreciation of which hang the progress, the welfare, and the dignity of nations; an arena in which right and wrong, truth and error, become terms of awful significance; in which the sound and the unsound in theory become fraught with consequences, both to mighty nations and to immortal men, so vast, so wide spreading, so far reaching, as to invest the smallest action or recorded opinion of the statesman with a solemn, almost a terrible, responsibility. The frivolous, the timid, the insincere, he could not away with. For those who were too thoughtless and empty to hold serious opinions, too lazy to form them, too wanting in moral courage to maintain them with earnest and resolute tenacity, he felt as much scorn as Christian principle would permit or justify. In times like ours, a man so *real* could ill be spared. There is, unquestionably, more of earnestness and sincerity among our public men now than formerly; but the supply of these



sterling qualities is still lamentably insufficient for the requirements of the day. The motives and principles by which politicians are guided, are often not such as they can avow or justify; nay, what is worse, the motives and principles which they put forward to the world, are not even those which they avow in their private coteries; and if a minister were to justify his conduct to his intimate circle on the same maxims of pure and lofty patriotism by which he defends it in parliament, he would possibly be reminded, that "the reporters were shut out, and there was no occasion to humbug." This unsound and unhealthy tone of public morality carries with it a species of contagious virus which stains the honour of the State, and poisons the very fountains of political philosophy. Against this Dr. Arnold exclaimed * with characteristic energy; and had he lived to shed credit over Oxford, and infuse a manlier and more honourable spirit among the rising generation of statesmen, he might have done much to arrest and antagonise the mischief. But since he has been called away, we know not where to turn for a teacher fitted to "take his stand," like the prophet, "between the living and the dead," and stay the progress of the moral plague.

* He would speak of a ministry advocating even good measures, inconsistently with their position and principles, as a daily painfulness, a moral east wind, which made him feel uncomfortable without any particular ailment. — Vol. i. p. 180.

LAING'S GERMAN CATHOLIC SCHISM.*

THERE probably never was a period since the Reformation of Luther, when the public mind of Europe was so widely and deeply agitated on religious topics, as at present.† In France the old struggle between Philosophy and Priestcraft has been renewed with all the old animosity ; but is distinguished from the former contest by the appearance of a third party in the arena—that of sincere and earnest Protestants—from whose efforts we augur a safer and happier result. The work of Michelet (*Le Prêtre, la Femme, et la Famille*), even when ample allowance is made for the inflated style and exaggerated colouring natural to an excited Frenchman, leaves a painful impression of the baneful and despotic influence still exercised by the priests over the national, and especially the female, mind,—and of the long and violent struggle which must necessarily be gone through before this influence can be finally subdued, either by the progress of sober sense, or the strength of a purer and more enlightened faith. In Scotland we have just witnessed an outburst of religious zeal, the genuineness of which has been attested by sacrifices and self-imposed privations of no trifling kind, and whose votaries have proved themselves not unworthy successors to the fierce, resolute, narrow, unhesitating temper of the early followers of John Knox. In our own country too, an earnest, reflecting, inquiring spirit has once more pene-

* *Notes on the Pilgrimage to Trèves, and the Schism in the German Catholic Church.* By SAMUEL LAING.

† This was written in 1845.

trated both the orthodox and the dissenting Churches, and the inevitable result is seen in a schism and a ferment which threaten dissolution at no distant date to our ancient and venerable establishment,—and in a marked and formidable movement towards Catholicism on the one side, and towards a purer, freer, more spiritual, and less doctrinal system on the other; while in the North of Germany a sudden and rapidly spreading excitement has arisen in the very bosom of the Catholic community, which forebodes the utter extinction of papal authority on this side of the Alps, and which may lead to the establishment of a more Christian Church than Christendom has yet seen. Of the commencement of this fermentation the work before us is a sketch.

Mr. Laing is already favourably known to English readers. His first work, the “Travels in Norway,” established his reputation as a careful and acute observer, and a graphic and agreeable describer. His account of Sweden was neither so interesting, nor so well received; but his third appearance, in his “Notes of a Traveller,” added materially to his fame. It was in all respects a very valuable and meritorious work—full of information, full of thought, and eminently suggestive,—disfigured here and there by too dictatorial a tone, and by singular crudeness of view and ignorance of established doctrines on topics closely connected with his speculations,—but opening some of the most important and exciting questions as to the influence of various governments on the well-being of their people, which the practical philosophers of our time can be called upon to solve. The work before us, on the Pilgrimage to Trèves, has much of the character of his other productions, with perhaps fewer of their merits and more of their faults than any preceding one,—less scrupulous care and fairness in its statements, more appearance of haste in

its speculations, and more of the tone and spirit of partisanship in its arguments. The history has too much the air of having been introduced as a convenient peg, on which the author could hang a statement of his views on a variety of cognate topics—such as the Prussian system of education—the German bureaucracy—the condition of the Irish peasant—and the endowment of the Catholic clergy—some of which we propose to examine as we go along. Still the book was wanted, and is well-timed, and we thank Mr. Laing for it.

Trèves is a cathedral town in the Rhenish provinces of Prussia, of great wealth and importance in the middle ages, but now sunk into comparative insignificance. In common with twenty-two other places—or rather in rivalry with them—it claims the possession of the seamless coat of our Saviour, mentioned by St. John (xix. 24.), the genuineness of which relic has been affirmed by a papal bull, and attested by many signs and wonders wrought at its shrine. In vain is it objected that although there can only be one such garment*, yet that the genuineness of the other twenty-one has been attested in the case of each of them by bulls and miracles as unquestionable as those at Trèves;—in vain is it shown that the coat is only alleged to have been discovered 300 years after it fell by lot into the hands of the Roman soldiers, and that nothing was heard of it, even at Trèves, till the twelfth century;—in vain have two learned professors of the university of Bonn calculated that a garment dyed,

* “There can only be one such coat, because, according to the history of each of them, it was spun and woven by the Virgin Mary for our Saviour when he was an infant, and miraculously grew with his growth, and never needed altering or lengthening. This part of the belief in it is essential to the symbolical meaning of the holy coat, as representing the one Invisible Church of Rome, which requires no altering, and is always the same since the birth of Christ.” —*Laing*, p. 11.

woven, and ornamented, as the one in question appears to be. must have cost at least from 16*l.* to 25*l.*, an expense wholly inconsistent with the character and worldly circumstances of Christ ;—still the chapter at Trèves maintains this to be the identical tunic woven by the Virgin Mary for her son, and typical of the one true and undivided Church ;—and the robust faith of the Rhenish Catholics receives the tale.

Two years after his appointment to the see of Trèves, Bishop Arnoldi, who appears strikingly to resemble Charles James of London, both in his aptitude for business and his thirst for power—after some time spent in the requisite preliminary arrangements, resolved to turn this holy relic to good account, and accordingly on the 6th of July, 1844, issued a circular notice, or apostolical epistle, to the following effect :—

“ That, in consequence of the urgent request of the clergy and body of believers in the bishopric of Trèves, the holy relic preserved in the cathedral, being the coat without seam worn by our Saviour, would be exhibited for the space of six weeks, from the 18th of August following, that the wish of all who have the pious intention of making a pilgrimage to Trèves, to behold and venerate the holy garment of our divine Redeemer, may be fulfilled, and each may gain the entire remission of his sins, granted by Pope Leo X., under date of July 26th, 1514. The said pope, namely, with the wish that the cathedral of Trèves, which has the honour of preserving the seamless coat of our Lord Jesus Christ, and many other holy relics *may be distinguished by suitable grandeur of establishment and splendour of ornament*,—gives, according to the words of the aforesaid bull, *a full remission of sins in all future time*, to all believers who go in pilgrimage to the exhibition of the holy coat at Trèves, sincerely confess and repent of their sins, or at least have a firm intention to do so,

—and *who moreover contribute with a liberal hand to the suitable decoration of the cathedral, as recommended by the Holy Father, but which still remains imperfect from the end of the last century.*"

Certainly, to our notions, a more coarse, shameless, undisguised, impudent begging-letter never appeared in the "Times" newspaper, or was issued by an anti-slavery society,—or an Exeter Hall Convention*,—or a "widow with four small children,"—or by an English clergyman to build his parsonage or endow his school. It did not, however, appear in this light to the good Catholics of Prussia. They do not seem to have paused for a moment to reflect whether a remission of sins promised by an elegant and dissolute pope in the sixteenth century was likely to be valid now; they do not seem to have entertained a feeling of natural disgust at the *avowed* mercenary object of the exhibition; but they flocked instantly and in multitudes to the appointed spot, with banners and crucifixes, and in regular procession—old men and children, young men and maidens,—and prostrated themselves before the relic, exclaiming, "Holy coat to thee I come!"—"Holy coat to thee I pray!"—till considerably upwards of a million of people—some say 1,500,000, or about half the entire Catholic population of the Rhenish provinces of Prussia—had, in the course of six weeks, performed the discreditable ceremony,—leaving behind them a million of dollars for the decoration of the cathedral.

Mr. Laing is, naturally enough, much dismayed at so astounding a display of abject superstition in an educated country in the nineteenth century, and draws

* See the begging circular issued by Sir Culling Eardley Smith in the name of the Anti-Maynooth Endowment Committee, announcing their insolvency, and requesting the assistance of pious Protestants to discharge their debts.

from it a most unfavourable inference as to the efficiency and value of the Prussian system of instruction, which has been the subject of so much praise and imitation.

“ It is certainly a very unexpected result of the far-famed educational system of Prussia.—of the boasted progress of the Prussian people in mental culture.—of the diffusion of suitable education among all by state schools, and a compulsory attendance on them by even the lowest classes,—that here, in the very centre of all this school quackery, the people are in such a deplorable state of ignorance and superstition, that a Catholic priest has only to proclaim the display of a relic which would hardly have passed for genuine in the darkest of the middle ages, and he collects in six months a million and a half of pilgrims to adore this relic—a greater multitude then has been on foot in Europe at one time, on any one religious occasion, since the days of the first crusades. If M. Cousin and other writers, who have explained and recommended to all Europe the Prussian system of national education and its general diffusion, have not, owing to the false statements made to them, been imposing on public credulity, not above two or three per cent. of the Prussian population are at present without the benefit of school education. A whole generation has grown up since the system was established, twenty-five or thirty years ago, and trumpeted throughout Europe. Of the million and a half of pilgrims who visited the holy coat at Trèves, from the adjacent cities and provinces of Prussia, a very small number, a trifling per centage, can have been ignorant, or untaught in reading, writing, arithmetic, singing, and the principles of their religion, whether Catholic or Lutheran, as taught in the Prussian schools. They are in the dilemma—M. Cousin, and the other writers on the Prussian school system—of confessing, either that they were imposed upon, and unwittingly imposed upon the reading public of Europe, in their accounts of the efficiency and diffusion of education in Prussia; or that education, as it is given in the Prussian schools—reading, writing, catechismal and other religious instruction—is of no power or value in society,—is entirely neutralised and ineffective, owing to the want of that real education and mental

exercise of a people, given by their self-action in a free social state, in which every man thinks and acts for himself. The undeniable fact stands against these writers, that the public mind in the most educated and enlightened provinces of the Prussian kingdom, after a whole generation of them has been taught in the government schools, has shown itself to be in the same state in the nineteenth century, as it may have been in about the fourteenth century, with probably less energy."—P. 21.

Now it is perfectly true that the highest and most valuable portion of the education of a people, as of individuals, is that which results from self-guidance and self-government, from the free exercise of their own powers,—from the application, that is, to the affairs of life, of the wisdom, skill, and information, acquired in childhood and at school, and from the experience which failures in this application seldom fail to bring; it is true likewise that in Prussia, as in almost every continental country, popular education has stopped short of this valuable point,—that the government fears to trust the people with the use of the knowledge it has so sedulously taught them, and that it weakens and impairs their mental powers by the common parental error of keeping them in leading strings;—but we see no reason whatever to believe that the educational system has not had a most happy and mighty influence in purifying the minds, improving the habits, and elevating the tastes of the people committed to its charge, who, as Mr. Laing himself admits, "are educated so as to appreciate and enjoy all the fine arts and innocent tastes which embellish and sweeten life;" and we feel satisfied that whenever civil liberty shall have been achieved by, or conferred upon, the German people, the effect of their diffused education in preparing them to use it as not abusing it, will be signally made manifest.

We think, moreover, that Mr. Laing shows a want both of philosophy and of observation, when he infers

the worthlessness of the education from the grossness of the superstition which exists under it, and side by side with it.—All history shows that the most careful and thorough instruction—such even as is given in the freest countries and to the highest classes—offers no guarantee against *any* amount of religious folly or fanaticism. Mr. Laing himself mentions facts which might have saved him from so unsound an inference. Bishop Arnoldi of Trèves was an able and highly educated man, and we have no ground for affirming that he was not himself a believer in the holy relic he exhibited. The Countess Droste Vischering was herself the most undoubting fanatic among the pilgrims who bowed down before the seamless vesture, for on her it worked a miracle, curing her in a moment of a lameness of many years ;—yet she was a lady of superior education, “of one of the first families in those parts, and of the highest personal character.” The Irvingites, and the believers in the unknown tongues, were, numbers of them, men who had had the best education that England or Scotland could afford,—were, or might have been, accustomed to take their part in public affairs, and helped to form the materials for the government of a free country ;—one of them, at least, was, or had been, we believe, a member of the Imperial Parliament, and another was the son of a cabinet minister, in a country on whose dominions the sun never sets. The Irish, again, are not highly educated certainly, but free enough, God knows, in political and civil action, from everything but their own prejudice and passion ; yet nowhere out of Spain are weaker or wilder superstitions implicitly believed. Nay, to come nearer home, wherein is prostration before the holy coat a sillier or poorer puerility than bowing to the east and west, and venerating surplices and candles, and a thousand other idle and grotesque observances, which proceed from the very

seat and centre of learning in our own land, and which are tolerated, taught, cried up, and enforced as portions of true piety and worship, not among the poor and ignorant, not among Methodists and Ranters, but among the most instructed of the clergy, and the most cultivated of the laity, of England? Finally, is it not notorious that there are thousands and tens of thousands of highly educated men among us, who believe (not perhaps reflectively, but still implicitly believe), without any evidence at all, doctrines and statements which no evidence could render credible?

The simple fact is that, as matters are at present regulated, there is no depth or darkness of superstition which is incompatible with the fullest and most elaborate education. On these subjects, education never has had fair play. In all countries — Switzerland and America perhaps excepted — the use of the intellect on religious topics is either priest-forbidden, or self-forbidden. In England more especially, when religion is in question, the most highly educated man abjures his education, denudes himself of his knowledge and his powers, voluntarily abnegates his reason, and so places himself on a level with the most ignorant. Education may give him vast acquirements and capacities, but the application of these to religious matters is prohibited. Catholicism distinctly and consistently commands this abnegation. Protestantism also commands it — sometimes with equal explicitness, though generally in more covert language, by preaching to its followers “to submit their reason,” and by treating doubt as sin; — till it has become a most common, though a most melancholy, spectacle to see men of the finest, strongest, acutest intellects, avowing their faith in the shallowest absurdities, — avoiding and dreading all *thought* on religious matters with a craven terror, lest thought should involve question, and question should end in

disbelief; holding their dearest property by a title-deed which they dare not examine, lest the flaw which they secretly suspect should stand revealed, and honesty should compel them to avow the wrongful tenure, and renounce the cherished possession.

To return to our story. In the midst of the controversy and excitement caused by this dismal display of mediæval superstition, "came," says Mr. Laing, "a cry from the East, which, like the roar of the lion in the desert, silenced all voices of inferior note. It electrified modern Germany." This was the publication of a paper by an obscure clergyman of Upper Silesia, entitled, "The Judgment of a Catholic Priest, Mr. Johannes Ronge, on the Holy Coat of Trèves," in which, with a style and spirit worthy of Luther, he exposed the degrading and unchristian character of the whole transaction, and denounced Bishop Arnoldi as having dishonoured and disgraced his sacred function. This remarkable document is too long to give entire, but we will quote, as specimens, two sentences from his apostrophe to the bishop.

"Do you not know—as bishop you must know it—that the founder of the Christian religion bequeathed to his apostles and disciples, not his coat, but his spirit? His coat, Bishop Arnoldi of Trèves, belongs to his executioners.—Know you not—as bishop you must know it—that Christ taught 'God is a spirit, and they who worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth?' And he is to be worshipped everywhere, not merely in Jerusalem in the Temple, or on Mount Gerizim, or at Trèves before the holy coat."

This energetic appeal Ronge speedily followed up by other addresses to his fellow-countrymen, yet bolder in their language and wider in their scope, in which he exhorts them to cast off the yoke of the Roman hierarchy and the abuses of the Papal Church, and to take

the Bible and the Bible only as the rule of faith and life. The public mind seemed ripe for the movement; the appeal was responded to in every part of Germany; priests and congregations simultaneously renounced their allegiance to Rome; churches—at least bodies of worshippers—consisting principally of the middle and independent classes, were formed in most of the chief towns; and the name of the “German Catholic Church” was adopted in contradistinction to the “Italian Catholic Church,” as they designated the original body from which they had seceded.

The most remarkable and influential of Ronge's fellow-labourers in this great spiritual rebellion was Czerzki, also a Catholic priest and pastor of the congregation at Schneidemühl, a small town in Prussian Poland. This congregation, as well as those at Breslau, Berlin, Elberfeld, Dresden, Offenbach, Kreuznach, and many others, has put forth a confession of faith, or rather a statement of the grounds of its difference with the Church of Rome. A comparison of these documents, several of which Mr. Laing publishes, gives rise to some curious considerations. They all agree in rejecting the papal authority and infallibility; in accepting the Scriptures as the only source of truth; in condemning auricular confession and the celibacy of the clergy; in claiming the performance of divine service in the vernacular tongue, and the administration of the sacrament in both kinds to the laity; but they differ as to the doctrines of Transubstantiation and Purgatory; the congregations of Schneidemühl and Elberfeld receiving both,—those of Kreuznach, Breslau, and Leipsic rejecting both,—while Berlin adopts a sort of *juste milieu* modification of the two. The confession of faith of Kreuznach is almost Unitarian,—while that of Breslau and Offenbach differs from the creed of the Anglican Church in an almost imperceptible degree; and that of Worms commences

by declaring that its members adopt "the doctrines or dogmas of the Catholic Church, as articles of faith,"—but rejects as abuses nearly every Catholic dogma wherein Romanism and Lutheranism are at variance. Such are the conflicting elements out of which the "German Catholic Church" is to be constructed!

The predominant feeling which all these seceding congregations have in common, obviously is the desire to avoid being confounded with, or merged in, the Lutheran, Calvinist, or any of the already existing Reformed Churches. "We remain, as before, Catholics," says the declaration of Worms. "I renounce the Pope," says Czerzki, the second of their leaders in rank and reputation, "and the false doctrines of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, but I remain a Catholic Christian, a Catholic priest. I will not be a Lutheran, nor a Calvinist, nor a Mennonite, nor a Greek Christian. I will remain a Catholic, but according to the words of the Scriptures; according to the precepts of Christ and his apostles, I am and will be an Apostolic Catholic Christian, an Apostolic Christian Priest."

It is clear that these religionists—sincere and excellent as they are—are no better logicians than their brethren. "Catholicism without the Pope!" is the form into which they have condensed their watchword; but Catholicism without infallibility is Protestantism; and where, save in the pope, or in the pope and councils combined, can infallibility reside? Moreover, all these congregations, with scarcely an exception, reject the remission of sins by priestly authority, and the efficacy of good works; and one or two of them, that of Berlin in particular, expressly affirm Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone;—and how those who reject the distinctive doctrines of Catholicism, and embrace the distinctive doctrines of Lutheranism, can find any ground broad enough—any principle clear enough—to



build a separate Church upon, must puzzle even the proverbial subtlety of scholastic divinity to discover.

It is obvious, we think, that the *doctrines* of these new Reformers offer no definite or tangible points of sufficient magnitude to save them from speedy absorption into the rest of the Protestant body of Germany. But there is yet one chance left to them—yet one basis unoccupied—one inexpugnable fortress of spiritual truth—on which, if they have the wisdom and courage to seize and hold it, they may found a genuinely new, noble, and enduring Church. If, abjuring in common superstitions too gross for the country and the age, they make the bond of union between them to consist in a Christian spirit, not in a code of speculative doctrine;—if, avoiding the rock on which all previous secessions have been split and wrecked, they are content to embrace in one great circle all fellow-Christians, without inquiring whether they are also fellow-Lutherans, or fellow-Calvinists, or fellow-Pelagians;—if they have the sense and the nerve to avoid the temptation of endeavouring to mould into one all the various confessions we have enumerated above, to clip, and stretch, and amplify, and reconcile them into one code of dogma, by the process of Procrustes' bed;—then, indeed, it will be in their power to form a “German Catholic Church,” on a basis so broad, on a principle so just, on a truth so wide and so profound, that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” They will have solved the problem which has baffled eighteen centuries,—they will have rendered the greatest service, and raised the noblest monument, to mental freedom and spiritual progress that Christendom has yet beheld.

Mr. Laing's remarks on these Confessions are worth notice.

“They consist,” he says, “almost entirely of negative, not of positive doctrine; of the negation of erroneous dogmas of the

error or to one under that the **affirmation** of other right dogmas. Now there is truth in the negation and renunciation of error, as well as in the affirmation and adoption of truth. That is no objection. . . . But negation will not sustain a sect. We find in history, that every sect which has had any good and rational basis, has been in positive ideas, whether errors or truths.

Negation will not sustain a sect, it is very true, nor is the mere negation of error a vivifying truth. But when Mr. Luth speaks of the want of any positive doctrine or the assertion of any distinct belief, in the declarations of the German Churches, he falls into the common error of confounding metaphysics with religion, and mistaking a voluminous, for a comprehensive, truth. He mistakes the magnificent truths which form the foundation of every one of them, and are expressed more or less distinctly in them all; and because they embody no solemn puerilities of fancy, no list of subtle propositions—he condemns confessions of faith thus simply and fully conceived, like those of Bressan and Schreierheim.

"We believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ our Saviour, who by his teaching, life, and death, redeemed us from sin and slavery. And we believe in a resurrection to a world beyond the grave." . . . As if three such articles as these could be thought to constitute a "scanty faith!" As if to go still further, the mere adoption and thoughtful repetition of one single formula.—the simple appeal to "**OUR FATHER, WHICH ART IN HEAVEN,**" did not involve a faith large, and distinct, and positive enough, to unite any number of sincere believers! As if the craving for doctrines more minute, more numerous, more dogmatical than these, was not a symptom of that mental weakness, whose beginning is orthodoxy, and whose culminating point is Fetichism.

Mr. Laing, however, is of a different opinion. His notion of Christianity is that which suits the keen and subtle intellects of his country. "It is not true," he says, "that Christ left behind him no body of doctrine or dogmas, constituting a Church. Christianity is the most dogmatical of all religions. It would be nothing if it were not." It is not thus that we have learned our common religion. It has been remarked by Archbishop Whately, as the distinctive feature of the Gospel,—that which separates it, *longo intervallo*, from the sacred books of every other religion,—that it contains *no* statement of doctrine, *no* formula of belief, *no* profession of faith, which its votaries were to accept and repeat,—but ceaseless exhortations to the observances of piety and virtue. It is remarkable that Christ has left us a *Prayer*, but no *creed*. Mahomet left a creed;—Christ left a command. Mahomet declared the essential points of his religion to be—"There is no God, but God, and Mahomet is the Prophet of God." Christ commanded, as the essential points of *his* religion,—“Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

“No doubt,” says Mr. Laing, “a political or theologico-political structure—that is, the machinery of a Church establishment different from the Roman Catholic—might be reared upon the foundations laid down in all these declarations; viz. upon the general and true principles of love to God and our fellow men; the rejection of the Papal power and hierarchy, and of its errors and superstitions; and, as a social arrangement, such a structure might be a vast, social, and political improvement; but it would not be a Christian Church, *that is, a body of doctrine, true, or held to be true by all its members.*”

It would not be a Church, according to Mr. Laing's singular definition of that indefinite term; but it *would* be a Christian Church, according to the original and

only legitimate meaning of the word *ecclesia*—that is, a body of worshippers, adoring one God, and obeying one law,—and would probably, if true to its primary principles, be the *most* Christian Church the world has yet seen.

Few speculations are more deeply interesting, than those which regard the probable ultimate result of the present excitement in the religious world, and of the unusual amount of acute and serious thought which recent events have directed towards ecclesiastical and theological questions. We have our view of the matter. Mr. Laing has his—which is the following:—

“Christianity seems to be resolving itself insensibly into two great divisions. A Christianity pure, spiritual, scriptural, and altogether purged from ceremonial forms of worship, and external influences of human power, either of Church or State; of which the present type is in Scotland;—and a Christianity altogether ceremonial, and founded on the imaginative and æsthetic elements in our mental constitution, rather than on our reasoning faculties,—a religion of show, relics, pictures, forms, saint-worship, pilgrimages, dresses, music, and church solemnities;—of which the present type is the Church of Rome. The half-way houses of a Lutheran Church, a Church of England, a Puseyite Church, a German Church . . . must tumble down in time, for they carry in them the dry-rot in their timbers from their first erection. The European mind will take shelter in one or other of the two extreme divisions of Christianity, and undoubtedly at last in that which is purest, simplest, most scriptural, most adapted to the intelligence of enlightened men, as the suitable worship of their Creator.”

A few moments' reflection, we think, might have satisfied a man of Mr. Laing's acuteness, that such a division of the Christian world into two Churches—an intellectual or doctrinal one, and an æsthetic or imaginative one, can never be realised, for this reason, if for no other;—that the doctrinal Church must of necessity

split into a vast number of sects and subdivisions—a number diminishing no doubt with the progress of enlightenment, but to the last a large multiple of unity, —*inasmuch as its basis is laid in dogmas*—about which men will always differ—differ widely—differ fundamentally—differ passionately. Now it is clear that the bond of union of any Church must be something about which its members do *not* differ. Therefore a *doctrinal* Church can never embrace more than a fraction of the reasoning portion of mankind.

There are three, and only three, conceivable ecclesiastical conditions in which Christendom can exist. You may have either,—

I. One infallible Church, the doctrines of which are fixed and promulgated by one supreme, unmistakeable authority;—or

II. An immense number of Churches, with distinct, positive creeds, to suit every variety of religious opinion; and of course *the stricter and more voluminous the creed, the more numerous the Churches*;—or

III. One Church, of which the bond of union shall be Christ's Spirit and example,—which may embrace any and every variety of speculative opinion,—which, in a word, may include all who can, *ex animo*, repeat the Lord's Prayer,—*the only formula which Christ has left behind him*,—the only one therefore to which the adhesion of Christians can be rightfully demanded.

Now we hope and believe that as the logical faculty grows into repute and exercise among men, Christendom will resolve itself into the first and last of these divisions. We are disposed to think that the Catholic Church will be purified by General Councils so as to meet the wants of an enlightened age, and will then embrace all *doctrinaires*—all who hold correct doctrine to be the one thing needful—all men who live on opinion:—while the other Church—yet to be formed,

if not now springing into life in Germany—shall embrace all who hold action and feeling to be more momentous than opinion—all men who live on love. We shall have the Church of the Head, and the Church of the Heart—the Scholastic, and the Christian Church.

There may and will always be an immense variety of sects among Christians—i. e., parties holding different speculative doctrines,—but it appears to us that there can be, among men who *reason*, only two great Churches, naturally and fundamentally distinct:—the *first* composed of those who conceive correctness of belief to be essential, and who therefore logically hold that God has provided an infallible referee, teacher, and guide to that correct belief:—and the *second* composed of those who conceive that there is no such infallible guide, and who therefore logically hold correctness of belief not to be essential. Those who affirm correct belief to be essential, and who yet declare that no infallible authority has been provided, but that every man must ascertain the truth for himself, occupy a ground which is clearly untenable, and the structures raised on which are therefore doomed to decay and dissolution. Geometry has no logic more irresistible than that on which this argument rests. God is no Pharaoh to bid us make bricks without straw. Whatever it is necessary for us to attain we may be sure that he has given us the means of attaining. If truth (by which we here mean *correctness of belief*, for *practically* whatever each man firmly and deliberately believes, that to him is truth), if correct belief be necessary, God has placed it within our reach. Now we know that free inquiry does not lead to correct belief, *because it leads men to different and to opposite opinions*. If therefore correct belief be necessary, God has not left men to work it out for themselves, but has provided a certain and manifest authoritative guide. No one now thinks

of denying the premises ;—none who admit the premises can, we think, escape the conclusion.

The assumed necessity of a correct Christian faith both to salvation and to virtue, constantly places those who maintain it, especially when they are men of tender feelings and honest minds, in a painful and perplexing dilemma. This is nowhere better shown, or more candidly acknowledged, than in the following passage in a late review of the life of Mr. Blanco White, attributed, we believe justly, to Mr. Gladstone — a man of rigid orthodoxy, but of gentle feelings, and an acute and polished understanding :—

“ There are several dangers of a most serious kind with which the contemplation of a mind and history like those of Mr. Blanco White is attended. It may tempt us to deny the reality of those virtues which are presented to us apart from their natural and proper accompaniment of Christian belief ; and in this way many, we think, *find an unworthy defence for their orthodoxy, at the cost of their justice and brotherly kindness* ; for there are those among us who, if any evidences were laid before them of piety on the part of a misbeliever, would think themselves obliged, beforehand, to reject them on account of his heresy ; or, again, admitting the virtues, and unable to deny the absence of all true perception of the Catholic faith, we may fall into *that most fatal error of regarding Christian dogma as a thing separable from the moral operation which generates the Christian character*, and of holding that a man may be saved by the law or sect which he professes. Or, again, if we escape this pitfall, and still cling to the idea that the powers necessary for our moral renovation, are linked by Divine order to Christian doctrines, — still, *when we are pressed with cases in which heretical opinion appears to have co-existed with personal piety*, we may be tempted into some classification of the several truths

which make the deposit of faith; and setting down as unessential whatever we find to have been rejected by persons living apparently under the influences of religion, we may draw up a new catalogue of fundamentals, which we shall too surely find, in the course of time, to be subject to unlimited reduction. But, fourthly and lastly, supposing we grant that Mr. Blanco White exhibits to our human view the marks of a true surrender of the will, and of its surrender to a loved and loving God; — and that we likewise steadily maintain the Catholic faith to be the only covenanted source of spiritual blessings; and that we also understand that faith as it was understood at Nice and Constantinople, when the note of unity was upon the Church, and she bore a universal and consistent witness to herself in her whole office; — *still we have before us the juxtaposition of what we cannot deny to be true though morbid and mutilated piety, with what we must assert to be in itself rank unbelief*, not many degrees removed from speculative Pantheism; and how then are we to deal with the distinct promise of our Lord, — ‘If a man wishes to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.’” — *Quarterly Review*, No. CLI. p. 190.

A little further on he puts the dilemma more briefly and clearly thus: — “*Here was a man who sought, and sought (humanly speaking) with integrity, for truth, and yet almost wholly missed it.*”

There is no escape from the dilemma, and we are satisfied that Mr. Gladstone himself does not conceive that he has found one. The assumption on which the dilemma is founded must be given up; we must at once admit that correct religious belief is neither the necessary preliminary nor the promised consequence of piety and virtue; and that it is perfectly possible for the most excellent and devout of men to search for truth with earnest and pure purpose, and yet to fail of attaining it. Integrity, sincerity, diligence, and

piety, do not inevitably lead to truth, — still less inevitably to orthodoxy. The fact is, that Mr. Gladstone's notion of Christ's having promised orthodox faith to every one who desires to obey the will of God, is founded on the misconception, so rooted in the minds of Anglican Protestants, that Christianity consists of a series of dogmatical propositions — that the Gospel of Jesus was a scholastic revelation. The passage on which Mr. Gladstone relies for the justification of his embarrassment is this: "Jesus answered them and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John vii. 16, 17.); which Mr. Gladstone interprets thus: — "If any man is sincerely desirous to do the will of God, God will teach him, by some internal revelation, what is the right interpretation of contradictory passages in Scripture, — what are the correct views of the Trinity, the Atonement, Verbal Inspiration, Priestly Absolution and Remission, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper;" — since on sound notions as to these points, according to orthodox opinion, salvation will depend. Now can any one seriously think that Christ's meaning *approached* even to this?

What is the signification of the word *doctrine*? Doctrine is a thing taught: — *Now what did Christ teach?* He went about doing good — teaching love to God and to man — rebuking the Pharisees for their pride and hypocrisy — rebuking the Scribes for their neglect of "the weightier matters of the law" — teaching that we should "keep the heart with all diligence, since out of it are the issues of life" — teaching patience, purity, forgiveness of injuries, the government of the thoughts, the requiting good for evil. Well and safely might he promise that they who did his Father's will should know whence came so holy and pure a doctrine — well might

he feel sure that the blessings following the practice of so lofty a morality would carry with them the irresistible conviction of its divine origin; since no man can govern his thoughts, forgive his enemies, love his neighbours, and adore his God, without the calmest, deepest certainty, that he is treading the path commanded and rewarded by the Great Lawgiver. A man who thus lives may well feel doubt as to this or that dogma of the orthodox, but he can feel no doubt that the doctrine which guides such a life — with its noble aims, its happy issues, its serene delights — can be from God alone.

These reflections lead us to the consideration of one of the most curious and important problems in history, which seems to have puzzled Mr. Coleridge ("Table Talk," p. 99.), and which Macaulay in his Review of "Ranke's History of the Popes" (vol. p. iii. 253.) propounds, but declines to solve, — though no man could do it better: — How it is, namely, that in the great struggle constantly going on, with alternating success, between belief and unbelief, no great body of men has, since the Reformation, found a resting-place in Protestantism; — how it is that, since that period, no nation has renounced Catholicism without renouncing Christianity, or has returned to Christianity without also returning to Catholicism.

"During the 18th century the influence of the Church of Rome was constantly on the decline. Unbelief made extensive conquests in all the Catholic countries of Europe, and in some countries obtained a complete ascendancy. The Papacy was at length brought so low as to be an object of derision to infidels, and of pity rather than of hatred to Protestants. During the 19th century the fallen Church has been gradually rising from her depressed state, and reconquering her old dominion. No person who calmly reflects on what, within the last few years, has passed in Spain, in Italy,

in South America, in Ireland, in the Netherlands, in Prussia, even in France, can doubt that the power of this Church over the hearts and minds of men, is now greater far than it was when the Encyclopedia and the Philosophical Dictionary first appeared. It is surely remarkable, that neither the moral revolution of the 18th century, nor the moral counter-revolution of the 19th, should, in any perceptible degree, have added to the domain of Protestantism. During the former period, whatever was lost to Catholicism was lost also to Christianity;—during the latter, whatever was regained by Christianity in Catholic countries, was regained also by Catholicism. We should naturally have expected that many minds, on the way from superstition to infidelity, or on the way back from infidelity to superstition, would have stopped at an intermediate point. At the time of the Reformation, millions found such a resting-place. Whole nations then renounced Popery without ceasing to believe in a first cause, in a future life, or in the divine mission of Jesus. In the last century, on the other hand, when a Catholic renounced his belief in the real presence, it was a thousand to one that he renounced his belief in the Gospel too;—and when the reaction took place, with the belief in the Gospel came back belief in the real presence.

“We by no means venture to deduce from these phenomena any general law, but we think it a most remarkable fact, that no Christian nation, which did not adopt the principles of the Reformation before the end of the sixteenth century, should ever have adopted them. Catholic communities have, since that time, become infidel and become Catholic again;—but none has become Protestant.”—*Macaulay's Reviews*.*

* “It is a profound question to answer, why it is that since the middle of the sixteenth century, the Reformation has not advanced one step in Europe.”—*Coleridge's Table Talk*.

The solution of the problem, is, we think, easy, when once we catch a glimpse of it. People brought up in any religion,—or in no religion,—generally remain therein, without much exercise of thought. But the mere fact of their changing their faith implies that they have *reasoned* on the subject. *Now to those who reason, Protestantism* (as hitherto conceived) *offers no resting-place.* Protestantism is an untenable position for a logical mind, and must ever remain so, for the reason already assigned;—viz. that a religion which declares (as both Catholicism and Protestantism do) that *true belief, sound doctrine*, is needful, or even the one thing needful, *is bound to provide a living infallible standard of true faith or sound doctrine.* This, Catholicism does provide; and is therefore consistent. This, Protestantism does not provide; and is therefore necessarily unsatisfying. Protestantism declares that correct belief, *the holding of doctrinal truth*, is essential to salvation, and declares at the same time that no infallible standard of doctrinal truth exists. It demands that which, in the same breath, it declares cannot be supplied. It leaves men *to guess and grope* for eternal happiness. The Catholic says—“It is necessary to hold the true faith; and I show you by a perpetually accessible, an infallible, an unambiguous authority, what that true faith is.” The Protestant says—“It is necessary to hold the true faith, but what that faith is, you must find out for yourself.” It is not true, as one writer affirms,—“that the theory of the Protestants is very simple and intelligible. They maintain that every man of sane mind, who honestly inquires, will arrive at sufficient truth to save him; and that if there be any one who thus honestly inquires, and falls into perfectly involuntary error, that error will not condemn him.” This is *not* the ordinary Protestant theory,—the latter part of the sentence at least. Most Protestants hold,

in distinct contradiction to daily and notorious fact, that if a man falls into error, it is because he has *not* honestly inquired, and therefore is to be condemned ; and it is unquestionable, that numbers of men, of sane and able minds, honestly inquiring, *do not* arrive at what (in the opinion of Protestants) is sufficient truth to save them. The Protestants are thus reduced to deny a fact, because the fact refutes a theory. Neither will it answer for them to refer to the Scriptures as the infallible standard of truth, since the whole question is as to the real meaning of those Scriptures ;—(where, indeed, a preliminary one does not arise as to what is the accurate text, and the limit of the authority of those Scriptures). It is clear that a religion, *which requires that which it does not provide the means of obtaining*, must, somewhere or other, be radically in error, and cannot be accepted by thinking minds, in an earnest, inquiring, and uncompromising age. Any logical reasoner, therefore, embracing, or wishing to embrace, Christianity, (*and naturally assuming, in consequence, the main dogma which both the great divisions of the Christian world alike teach*—that correct belief is essential,) *can* only become a Catholic, because Catholicism alone can assure him what that correct faith is. Either correct belief is not essential, or a clear and certain standard of correct belief must have been provided. Into one or other of these opinions, the thinking world must ultimately divide itself. *Now, neither of these is common orthodox Protestantism.* If it be once admitted, that correct belief is *not* the essential of Christianity, then nations, and reasoners, may become Christian without becoming Catholic. Till then, in a thinking age, this is impossible. Hence the marked tendency of all earnest and reflecting minds to diverge into one or other of the above views. Hence the entire eschewing, among many German divines, of dogmatic theology.

Hence the whole history of Blanco White. Hence the rising school among ourselves. Hence the lapse of Newman into Catholicism, and of Arnold into liberality. Both saw in their secret souls the unsound foundation, or rather, we should say, the weak point in the logical position, of ordinary Protestantism. Newman, starting from the preliminary assumption that correct belief is the essential point, after many floundering, and much recalcitration, sees the necessity of an infallible interpreter, and takes refuge in the Church of Rome. Arnold, beginning with denying the existence of an infallible interpreter, is driven to admit the non-necessity of correct belief.

How it happened that, at the period of the Reformation, millions should have found a resting-place in Protestantism, without perceiving how unsound and untenable was its position, is a problem of more difficult solution. Separation from the Church of Rome was not a step contemplated by Luther, when he first began his war against its abuses. After this separation was complete, and the Pope's authority and infallibility were denied, it is certain that the Reformers began to have a vague and uneasy consciousness (without, however, logically sifting the matter) that a new authoritative standard of correct doctrine must be found, or made. This led to the concoction, by a council of divines, of the celebrated *Confession of Augsburg*, which was required to be as "thoroughly received and believed" among Protestants, as were the decrees of papal councils among Catholics. Subsequent differences among Reformers led to the discovery, or the admission, that these systems of doctrine were not infallibly true; and then the "Right of Private Judgment" was set up,—without the world perceiving how fatal a blow was thus struck at the main dogma of both theologies—the necessity of correct faith; since to

make correct belief essential to salvation, and yet leave it to individual judgment to discover that correct belief, is to make a man's hopes of heaven depend upon his knowledge and critical acumen*,—a position involving, if not an absurdity, at least a blasphemy. We take leave of this subject with one concluding observation. The Reformation was only half a step forward. The Reformers shrunk from the second half,—which remains to be taken yet, and which, when taken, will excite more vehement outcry and persecution than the first.

After a detailed consideration of some of the effects of the present state of ecclesiastical affairs among the mixed population of Northern Germany, Mr. Laing proceeds to apply his remarks to the solution of the great Irish question, which has recently so much disturbed the minds of Englishmen, viz. the endowment of the Irish Roman Catholic clergy—a measure, to which, as might be anticipated, he is vehemently hostile. His objections to it are various, and some of them worth consideration. He considers *first*, that “in this transition crisis of the Irish nation, when the greatest amalgamation influences ever applied to unite two countries are on the eve of working, it would be very doubtful policy for government to step in and fix, by endowment of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, the social condition of the people, as far as the machinery of the Church acts on their condition, in all future ages.” He objects *secondly*, that such a proposed endowment would not relieve the people from their present ecclesiastical burdens, inasmuch as the payments they now make to their priests are not “voluntary contributions towards their maintenance, which would cease when suitable provision was made for

* “Je ne puis pas croire que Dieu m'a ordonné, sous peine de damnation, d'être si savant.”—*Rousseau's Emile*.

them by government, but involuntary payments inherent in the very nature of the Catholic faith. Easter and Christmas offerings must be made, masses for the dead, prayers for the living, extreme unction for the dying;—all that is now paid must continue to be paid, for the sake of the giver or for those for whom it is given, not for the sake of the receiver, or for his support. It is to save his own soul, or the souls of those he loves, from purgatory, that the Catholic gives; and his giving is essential. The endowment of the Catholic clergy, therefore, would not relieve the people, but only furnish the Church of Rome with funds for supporting another body of 2200 priests in the country." In proof of which, Mr. Laing says that in Prussia, where the Catholic priests *are* endowed by the state, the ecclesiastical contributions are levied just as regularly as in Ireland. *Thirdly*, he ridicules, as a gross exaggeration, "the idea that six millions and a half of people can be impoverished or seriously burdened by the sustentation of 2200 single men;" and supports his opinion by a most transparent fallacy. *Fourthly*, he assumes, without a shadow of reason, and against all reason, that if we endow the Catholic Church in Ireland, we must necessarily endow it in England and Scotland also. *Fifthly*, he urges, at considerable length, that if you endow the Roman hierarchy, you will greatly increase their power and their pretensions, make them less pliable and amenable to civil control, and lead in all probability to the demand, which has given rise to such untold misery in Germany, that in all cases of mixed marriages the children shall be brought up as Catholics. *Finally*, he urges, that such proposed endowment would be intolerable to the Protestant feeling of England and Scotland, whether paid out of the consolidated fund, the produce of general taxation, or out of the surplus revenues of the Irish Church,—revenues

which he conceives the government has a right to appropriate to religious and educational uses, but not to apply to the endowment of a religion repugnant to the feelings of the nation at large.

We confess there is much to be said in support of the first of these objections. There can be no question that Ireland has been for some time improving, slowly perhaps, but still decidedly. There can be scarcely more doubt that she is on the eve of a still more rapid and more marked amelioration. Under these circumstances, we should be sorry to take any step which might have a tendency to arrest this progress, or to perpetuate and consolidate a Church which we, as well as Mr. Laing, consider to be most mischievous in many of its social influences. But, as will be seen from the preceding pages, we do not consider Catholicism as a faith which is destined to give way before Protestantism, as a faith which is already on the decline, whose weakness, therefore, it would be unwise to prop up, or whose decadence it would be impolitic to arrest. We have no hope of the conversion of a whole nation, least of all a nation like the Irish, and we have, therefore, no fear of checking or discouraging that conversion, by placing the Catholic clergy in a more comfortable worldly position than that which they at present occupy. Looking upon Catholicism in Ireland as a permanent fact,—permanent, that is, as far as statesmen can be expected, or would be wise, to look before them,—we do not shrink, as many do, from a measure which may assist in perpetuating it. If it is ever to be overthrown, it will be by some influence in opposition to which any endowment which England is likely to bestow would be incalculably insignificant.

We are disposed to believe that Mr. Laing is right in supposing, that the endowment of the priests would not altogether relieve the people from the payments at

present required by the Roman Church, but he is as certainly wrong in conceiving that these payments are not at times severely burdensome to the destitute peasantry of Ireland. There is moreover, we believe, little doubt that the payments extorted by the priests, for the various offices and consolations of the Church, are much greater than the sums respectively prescribed by the canon, and we may at least hope that this enhancement would be relinquished when the clergy had independent means of support. Still, however, it must be confessed, that, if his view of the matter be correct, one of the chief arguments by which endowment has been recommended, is deprived of much of its validity. That by endowing the Catholic clergy, you will materially augment their power or their pretensions, we see no reason to believe. The English nation, as the Irish may be well aware, will not long tolerate the endowment, if, as Mr. Laing imagines, it would be so grossly and ungenerously abused: and any trouble likely to arise from the claims on the children of mixed marriages (if more probable than at present, which we greatly question), must be obviated by a distinct concordat with the Head of the Catholic Church.

The aversion of English churchmen to endow a religion they disapprove out of the revenues of the Irish establishment, and of both churchmen and dissenters to endow it out of the produce of general taxation, we are not disposed to treat with the deference which Mr. Laing thinks to be its due. There can, of course, be no question that, if such an endowment is to be provided, justice requires that it should be taken out of the surplus revenues of an establishment, whose superfluity is a ceaseless and irritating sore to the population of Ireland, and a large proportion of whose wealth, disguise it and deny it as we may, is derived from robbery more or less direct, more or less

ancient, of the votaries of that religion to which they are now called upon to make a partial and tardy restitution. There is one patent fact in history, which alone should suffice to shut the mouths of Protestants whenever they dare to murmur against the threatened spoliation of their overgrown establishment. For centuries there was a law by which any member of a Catholic family might, by renouncing the paternal faith, take possession of all the paternal estates; and a large amount of property, by this dishonourable system of legalised theft, passed from the votaries of one Church to those of the other.* A Church which, till very recently, did not scruple to enrich itself by such scandalous dishonesty, has for ever forfeited its right of remonstrance or complaint, were it even forced to disgorge every farthing thus wrongfully acquired.

But it will be urged, that however fair and wise it may be to endow the Catholic clergy out of the surplus revenues of the Protestant Church in Ireland, there can be no justification for endowing them out of a fund to which the main contributors are Englishmen and Protestants, who revolt at the idea of being thus forced to maintain a religion which they regard as idolatrous and pernicious. Unhappily they, like the Irish establishment, have forfeited their right to exclaim against the injustice of such a measure. For not only have English churchmen for centuries back compelled—not only do they still compel—both Catholics and dissenters in this country, to support a religion which they renounce and condemn (and that which is just in England cannot be unjust in Ireland,—that which is

* The "Quarterly Review" says:—"The Roman Catholics of Ireland, being above four-fifths of the population, do not, we believe, possess one-tenth of the soil; and the *penal laws have for above one hundred years been directed in every way to prevent the accumulation of property in their hands.*"

just when committed *by* Protestants, cannot be unjust when committed *against* them);—but it must never be forgotten, that every act of oppression and persecution committed against the Catholics of Ireland, has uniformly met from the mass of English and Scotch Protestants with the most zealous and cordial encouragement, and the more earnest the Protestantism, of course the more vehement has been the encouragement. In every step which the Irish government or the Irish Church have taken for the last three centuries in their course of unhallowed bigotry towards Romanism, they have been hounded on by the answering bigotry of English sectaries and English churchmen. It was this very sympathy and support that so long enabled them to persevere in a system which has at length brought Ireland into a condition requiring, in the opinion of our statesmen, the endowment of the Catholic clergy as a healing balm;—and we affirm, therefore, that neither English sectaries nor English churchmen have a right to demur to whatever payment may be necessary to remedy the mischief they have caused. No plea of conscientious scruple can entitle those who have inflicted the injury, to shrink from the reparation. The religion which permits a man to rob and to oppress, and forbids him to make restitution and atonement, is entitled to no respect. In such a case, the mere mention of religious difficulties is a mean and pitiful evasion.

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ing state of mind. His statements and conclusions must be sifted rather than taken for granted; and some of his statistics, and much of his political economy, the reader exercised on such matters will put summarily aside. We feel, however, too much indebted to him for having called public attention to several of the most interesting questions of the day, for the thorough discussion which some of these have undergone at his hands, for much valuable information, and for still more valuable suggestions, to feel disposed for severe criticism; and therefore, without further preface, we shall at once proceed to consider a few of the very momentous matters which he has opened for investigation.

The series of sudden and nearly simultaneous convulsions which agitated the continent in 1848—the strange social phenomena which those convulsions brought to light—the apparent ease with which the oldest and strongest governments were overthrown, and the majestic and dignified tranquillity which England maintained amid the general confusion—could not fail to awaken the most anxious interest as to the causes at once of the convulsion and the contrast. In Italy, in France, in Germany, dynasties which a few months before had been thought as stable as the hills, and constitutions which seemed rooted in the habits, if not in the affections, of the people, fled away before the whirlwind like withered scrolls. Standing armies, nurtured in unquestioning obedience, trained in all the sternness of military discipline, which seemed mighty alike to conquer or control, became in a single hour dissolved, paralysed, or traitorous. Principles which struck at the root of all order and subordination, systems incompatible with the progress or existence of society, were suddenly proclaimed, adopted, and enforced, as if they had for years been the secret creed of the community; while in England, suffering as she was under the pros-

tration consequent on the commercial crash of 1847, with a high price of food, with thousands of unemployed artisans, and with a large portion of her population in a state of permanent and melancholy distress—with Ireland at her side, excitable by nature, turbulent by habit, goaded by wicked agitators, and afflicted with terrific famine—scarcely a disturbance occurred which the common constables could not repress; scarcely a periodical publication appeared, scarcely a popular movement took place, which did not indicate the spread of sound views, and the progress of healthy and contented feeling among the mass of the community. All this pointed to some marked and prolific contrasts between the social and political condition of Britain and of the continental countries, which might explain so singular a diversity, and which it was specially important to discover and proclaim.

It soon became apparent that among many minor differences three might be distinguished as of paramount weight and influence. These are—1. The different tenure and division of landed property in England and on the continent; 2. The bureaucratic system, or “functionarism,” as Mr. Laing calls it, prevalent all over Europe, but almost unknown here; and, 3. The peculiar constitution of the standing armies in the respective countries.

“We are,” says Mr. Laing, “in our social life, arrangements, and institutions, much more distinct and widely apart from the continental people since the peace of 1815 than we ever were at any former period of our history. We have no body of peasant-proprietors of land; we have no body of government functionaries, no *beamptonstand*, with rank, social influence, and power above the nobility, gentry, proprietors, and capitalists of a country, and forming a distinct class, of more weight and importance in public affairs than any other in the community, or, more properly, having the sole management and voice in local and general affairs, to the exclusion of every other class;

we have no *landwehr*, or compulsory military service, placing every able-bodied male of the whole population, without exception, exemption, or substitution, in the ranks of a regiment for three years, and then calling him out annually for military duty and exercise for several weeks, as long as he is fit for service."

What are the tendencies and operation of these three distinctive elements of the social system; whether the new continental or the old English arrangements of society and government are most conducive to welfare and to progress; whether large or small properties, the law of primogeniture or the law of equal inheritance, best secure good cultivation, national prosperity, and national content; whether the bureaucratic system of France and Germany, or the municipal, representative, and aristocratic system of Great Britain, are most fitted to attain the great objects of good government; and whether our mode of enlistment for life (or nearly so), the French and Austrian conscription for seven years, or the Prussian *landwehr* or plan of universal service, offer the wisest and safest foundation for a standing army—these are the momentous and difficult questions which Mr. Laing brings forward for discussion; these are the problems, speculative no longer, but practical and urgent, which the political philosopher of to-day must solve, and which we, in all diffidence, but after much study, conscious of their knotty entanglements, but conscious also of their weighty import, propose to lay before our readers as clearly and as tersely as we can.

1. In Great Britain everything conduces to the aggregation of landed property into large masses and into few hands. Law, custom, circumstance, and the hereditary prejudices which grow out of all these and react upon them, all tend in the same direction. The old military and feudal system necessitated the undi-

vided descent of land; the aristocratic feeling which survived this necessity still continues the custom; and economic writers are beginning to discover much sound policy and right feeling in a proceeding which at first sight seems at variance with both. Many properties are entailed from generation to generation upon the eldest son, so that the existing proprietor is only a hampered life tenant: this is a system which it is impossible to reprobate too strongly. If a man dies intestate, the law decides that all his real estates shall descend to the eldest son; and the law has so modified the feelings and ideas of men (which are apt, as we know, to run in ruts) that when wills are made, they are generally pervaded by the same spirit which dictated and which maintains the law; and the large portion, if not the whole, of the landed property of the deceased commonly follows the rule of primogeniture. The consequence of these influences, operating through many centuries, is, that with 18,000,000 of people in England and Wales, the number of landed proprietors is supposed not much to exceed 180,000; or one per cent. of the population, or five per cent. of the heads of families. Now, as England and Wales contain about 37,000,000 of acres, exclusive of water, this would give 200 acres as the average size of properties. Of course the chief part of the land is held in far larger masses.

In France, on the contrary, the land of a deceased proprietor is divided equally (or nearly so*) among all his children. If he dies intestate, the law divides it for him according to this plan: if he makes a will, he must make it in conformity with this plan. No choice is left him. This law of compulsory partition has now been in active operation for sixty years; it dates from 1791. It is more cherished by Frenchmen than any other law;

* A father has one child's portion, to appropriate among the children as he pleases.

it is the only law which they obey un murmuringly; it embodies and expresses their sole idea of liberty—because it breathes equality. Strange that an enactment so restrictive, so hampering, so fatal to a man's power of "doing what he will with his own," of bestowing as he pleases what he has inherited, or what he has acquired—a law which by an Englishman would be resented and shaken off as an intolerable and unjust tyranny—should be worshipped by a Frenchman as containing all he knows of freedom! Yet so it is. Under the operation of this law, the land of France has become subdivided to a degree which is felt to be so perilous and injurious that the process has at length been checked; no further *morcellement* is taking place, and even a slight reaction is observable. In a population of 36,000,000, above 4,250,000 are proprietors of land; or 12 per cent. of the inhabitants, and about 55 per cent. of the heads of families. The average size of the estates held by each proprietor is under twenty-four acres; while of the 11,500,000 proprietors into which the land was divided in 1842, 5,500,000 were assessed at less than five francs to the *contribution foncière*, or land-tax, which is generally fixed at about a sixth part of the annual value; that is to say, half the properties in France were only worth 25s. a year; two of these properties being generally held by one individual. M. Lullin de Châteaueux, one of the best authorities, divides the proprietors of France into three great classes:—the small proprietors, who are 3,900,000 in number, and own, on an average, nine acres each; the middling class, estimated at 700,000, who own about fifty acres each; and the large proprietors, who may be 200,000 in number, and whose properties reach 200 acres.

Peasant proprietorship in Prussia dates only from the wars of Napoleon, in 1807, and, of course, has not had

time to produce its full effect. We have not the means of giving very full statistics on the subject. All that is known is, that the process of subdivision is still going on, and that every year sees more proprietors and smaller properties. In the whole of Prussia, out of 16,000,000 of people, there were, in 1849, only 474 individuals possessing a clear annual income of more than 1,200*l*.

It appears that there are 315,000 estates of less than fifty acres, not reckoning the cases of those peasants who merely possess a cottage and garden of their own. (*Schubert's Statistics of Prussia.*)

In France and Prussia peasant proprietorship is of comparative recent date. But there are other countries in which it had existed for centuries: these are, Norway, Switzerland, and Flanders. We have no means of stating to what extent the subdivision of land in these countries has been carried. In Norway the properties are generally of a reasonable size: in Flanders the holdings, if not the estates, are occasionally as small as six acres; in Switzerland, according to Sismondi, the *morcellement* has proceeded much further than is desirable. But, generally speaking, in all these countries the subdivision of estates long ago reached its limits; and where they are not more than sufficient to support an industrious family in comfort, they are permitted, by private arrangement, to descend entire.

The desirableness or undesirableness of this subdivision of the land among a number of small proprietors has been so recently and fully discussed by a host of eminent and able men, such as Mill, M'Culloch, Sismondi, Passy, and Laing, that it might appear presumptuous, and to many of our readers tedious, were we to attempt to enumerate their arguments *pro* and *con.*, and to hold the balance and pronounce judgment between them. We shall prefer to sum up the principal

consequences, favourable and the contrary, which have, by general admission, been found to result from the system, and to indicate a few points on which the subject seems to us not to have been fairly fathomed, and on which some singular fallacies have been broached.

Much good controversy has been wasted on the question, whether really good farming can co-exist with the system of small holdings; the general idea in England being that large farms are essential to high and successful cultivation, the continental opinion being just the reverse. The facts of the controversy are, that in this country the highest cultivation is almost uniformly to be found on the largest farms; while a far higher cultivation — probably the highest that anywhere prevails — is to be found under the *metayer* system of Lombardy and Tuscany, in the small holdings of Flanders, and in the small properties of Switzerland; and a far worse cultivation — probably the most imperfect and slovenly in any civilised country — may be met with in the small holdings of Ireland and the small properties of France and Savoy; the stimulus and the means of good cultivation being found, in the one case, in the capital and science of the large farmer, and, in the other, in the indefatigable diligence and the affectionate watchfulness of the small proprietor; while the bad cultivation of Ireland is traceable to the ignorance, sloth, and insecurity of the cottier, and the bad cultivation of France to a subdivision of the soil clumsy in manner, excessive in degree, and incompatible with the acquisition of a sufficiency of manure.* Good farming is equally at-

* The truth we believe to be, that the success or failure of the system of peasant proprietorship depends much less upon any inherent virtue or vice in the system itself, than upon the character, habitudes, and government of the people among whom it is established. In Norway, Switzerland, Schleswig, and Flanders, the small proprietors are flourishing, contented, and respectable. In France

tainable under either system, if not carried to an extreme; and the summary of the whole question may, we believe, be contained in this simple formula:— That, assuming the application of a sufficiency of capital, skill, and industry, to do justice to the capacities of the soil, the largest gross produce is attainable by *la petite culture* (as it is called); and the largest produce in proportion to the labour expended is procurable by *la grande culture*. How, then, is the larger produce which results from small farming obtained? Clearly by bestowing upon it a greater amount of labour. But how does it answer to bestow this extra labour in the former case and not in the latter? Clearly, again, because it is bestowed gratuitously. If it is worth the small farmer's while to bestow this extra labour — *i. e.*, if it yields him any return equal to what he might have gained in employing it in any other way — it must be as well worth the large farmer's while to hire this extra labour, at a fair price; *i. e.*, to give for it a payment equal to the extra return it yields. If it is really worth to the small proprietor working on his own farm (say) a penny an

and Savoy they are restless, impoverished, and often miserable; in Ireland, we have no doubt, they would become so too. We have just received the following account of the country of the Waldenses from a gentleman who has resided there for twenty years:—"The problem of territorial distribution has found its natural solution in these valleys; that is, it has reached that point beyond which subdivision cannot descend to any lower depth; in which each person possesses just land enough to exist, and rear a small family in the most wretched poverty, maintaining in the cold season a temperature at which life can be continued by living in the stables along with their cattle, and exposed to the injurious exhalations of such close and uncleansed abodes, consuming a most innutritious diet, exposed to fever, and, from any casualties of the season, to actual famine. The population is, therefore, stationary, sometimes even declining; and any surplus must and *do* emigrate. There is absolutely no agricultural surplus, nothing to exchange for products out of the valleys, and no money."

hour, it must be worth while for the large farmer to give a penny an hour for it. If the labour be applied in the one case and not in the other, it can only be because the labourer in the one case gives it for less than it is worth ; or, in the other case, asks for it more than it is worth. The fact being that, generally speaking, the man would idle away this extra hour, or employ it in fitting recreation, if the sentiment of proprietorship did not tempt him to work when he should be amusing his family or improving his mind, or to work for a less remuneration than he could obtain if, instead of working on his own farm, he hired his services during that extra hour to another master. He works for himself for less than he would take to work for any one else. In this case it is obvious that, economically speaking, his labour has been ill bestowed ; and that if he were a man bent upon turning every hour to the best account, it would be as profitable to hire himself to the large farmer for his spare moments, at such small remuneration as it would be profitable to the large farmer to pay, as to employ himself on his own land ; and probably more profitable to occupy himself in some other employment—whether handicraft, by which he might earn or save a trifle ; or mental cultivation, by which he might lay the foundation for future prosperity. If the extra produce on a small farm is obtained by employing on it the labour of the son and daughter (for example) of the proprietor, whose earnings, if otherwise employed, would reach 50*l.* a-year, it is clear that he pays 50*l.* a-year for their labour ; and if the extra produce resulting from that labour is not worth 50*l.*, he and his family are losers by their system of minute farming.

Mr. Laing does not perceive this. He conceives it to be impossible that a large farm should be as highly and minutely cultivated as a small one, and does not see wherein this supposed impossibility consists.

"It stands to reason," he says, "that no large farm (one of 500 acres for example) can, by dint of capital and hired labour, be made literally a garden in productiveness, in the cropping, cleaning, weeding, manuring, and cultivation of it; but the 500 acres could be made into a hundred gardens of five acres each, and each dug, raked, manured, weeded, and cropped by the family it supports, and each lot be as productive as any kitchen or market garden—a productiveness which no large farm can ever approach."

Why can it never approach it, but because the gardener is content to work at lower wages for himself than for his neighbour who farms 500 acres? There can, it is clear, be no other reason.

Mr. Laing's reasonings soon bring him full tilt against that "economy of labour" which is the main element in cheapness of production, and forms so important an item in the success of our first-rate modern farmers; and he is not sufficiently trained in economic science to recoil from the position into which he has brought himself. "What is the gain," he asks, "unless the labour thus economised or superseded can be beneficially employed in some other branch of industry?" But did it not occur to him that if this labour could be superseded it could not have been needed, and must therefore have been superfluous, and not "beneficially employed" in its former occupation? And does he not see that his objection would apply to all saving of labour, and would go the full length of maintaining that we should employ as many hands as possible on the same work; and that, if applicable to agriculture, it must be applicable to manufactures also, and would soon carry him to condemn all machinery and all improved processes of production, till actual deficiency of population forced them upon us?

Mr. Laing puts a case (p. 38.), and draws a contrast which forcibly illustrates his fallacy, though he seems

unable to extract the true conclusion from his argument :

“ Himself alone

By his own wisdom not a jot the gainer.”

“ Take,” says he, “ an estate in the Lothians of 1600 acres, divided into eight farms of 200 acres each, which is about an average size for arable culture. Suppose it well farmed after the most improved system. The farmer of 200 acres will not employ more than ten labourers, at the outside, all the year round : we have thus eighty people kept on this estate of 1600 acres. Now, take a space of land in Flanders of equal extent ; it is here divided into garden-farms of five or six acres : every foot of land is cultivated, dug with the spade or hoe where horse and plough cannot work, and all is crop, or in preparation for crop. It is evident that the produce from the 1600 acres under such garden-culture must surpass that of the 1600 acres under large farm-cultivation, however good, as much as a kitchen-garden surpasses in productiveness a common field.”

Unquestionably it must ; we will assume the produce to be double—treble, if Mr. Laing chooses. But among how many individuals is this produce divided ? Let Mr. Laing answer.

“ On the 1600 acres in Flanders, instead of eight farmers with their eighty farm-servants, there will be from 300 to 320 families, or from 1400 to 1600 individuals, each family working its own piece of land.”

In the one case, therefore, the land has to support — *i. e.* the produce has to be divided among — eighty-eight persons ; in the other case among 1500 : consequently, in order to allow the Belgian as large a share of the gross produce as the Scotchman, this produce must be, not double, not treble, but *seventeen* times as great in the former country as in the latter. If, indeed, the object were to support as many individuals on the land as it could possibly maintain, then, indeed, garden-cultivation — nay, potato-cultivation —

would be the way to reach this object ; though even then this garden-cultivation would be as attainable by applying an equal amount of labour on large farms as on small. But if, on the contrary, the object be (as we conceive it should be) to make the share of each individual as large as possible, *i. e.* to increase his comforts, and to raise his standard of living, then the larger the produce in proportion to the labour, or, in other words, the smaller the number employed in raising a given amount of produce, the better. Inequality in the distribution of this produce in no degree affects the present question.

It is, then, abundantly manifest that much of the discussion of the relative productiveness of large or small farms is a mere logomachia ; that labour for labour, capital for capital, science for science, the produce will be equal : and the probability is, that science will generally be on the side of the larger holder. In Flanders, in Switzerland, and in Norway, it is certain that the subdivision of land has not been attended with any injurious effects upon cultivation ; in France on the contrary, and in Savoy, where, as we have seen, this subdivision has been carried much further, its operation upon the produce of the land has, by common admission, been most deplorable. It appears that the average produce of wheat per acre, which in England is thirty-two bushels, is throughout France only fourteen bushels, and in the best districts seldom more than twenty. Yet in France two-thirds of the population are employed in agriculture, and in England only one-third. Many travellers, and many native writers, give the most picturesque details as to the excess to which this subdivision is carried, often reaching a point at which not only adequate culture is impossible, but at which roads, pathways, ditches, and fences, occupy a most inordinate

portion of the soil. M'Culloch and Laing are full of these descriptions, but our limits will not allow us to quote them.

2. Even Mr. Mill (from whom we always differ with reluctance and with misgiving), though his chapters on peasant proprietorship are filled with the most alluring pictures of the face of the country and the state of society in those lands where the law of equal inheritance prevails, and where families are the owners of the land they cultivate, allows that the advantages of the system are cancelled by too minute *morcellement*. "The benefits," he observes, "of peasant properties, are conditional upon their not being too much subdivided; that is, upon their not being required to maintain too many persons in proportion to the produce that can be raised from them by those persons. . . . That each peasant should have a patch of land, even in full property, if it is not sufficient to support him in comfort, is a system with all the disadvantages, and scarcely any of the benefits, of small properties; since he must either live in indigence on the produce of his lands, or depend, as habitually as if he had no landed possessions, on the wages of hired labour, which, besides, if all the lands around him are held in a similar manner, he has little prospect of finding." Let us bear this sentence in mind, for it is a very pregnant one.

It is but just to study the effect of peasant proprietorship in those countries where the subdivision of land has not been carried too far; and we fully concur in all that Mill, Laing, and Sismondi say as to the comfort, content, and respectability of the people living under such a system where this condition is observed. But what does this condition imply? How, under a law of equal inheritance, can the division of estates be stopped as soon as it has reached that limit below which its continuance would be injurious? Clearly only by

one of two means; either by each family only rearing two children, a boy and a girl, of whom the girl shall marry another proprietor, and the boy shall succeed to the estate on his father's death (in other words, by reducing the population to a stationary state); or by one son, either by private agreement or by law (as in Austria*), purchasing the shares of the others, who are to go forth into the world and seek their fortune in other lines. Let us look at the operation of these two alternatives.

Practically, as we shall presently discover, the first of these alternatives presents the only effectual means by which peasant proprietorship, under a law of equal inheritance, can be combined with a due limit to the *morcellement* of land. Mr. Mill alone has perceived this conclusion, and has dared to face it. He alone does not shrink from, ignore, or attempt to shirk the issue of his reasoning. On the contrary, he evidently regards it as one of the strongest recommendations of peasant proprietorship, that it operates to induce men to abstain from marriage, and deliberately to restrict the size of their families. He may be right—he is at least consistent and far-seeing; but let no reasoner who wishes to be considered at once clear-headed and honest adopt Mr. Mill's premises and evade his conclusion. "In Norway," says Mr. Laing, "it is evident that some cause or other, operating on aggregation of landed property, counteracts the dividing effects of partition among children. This can be no other than that the deaths of co-heirs, and the marriages of female heirs

* In Austria, according to M'Culloch ("Treatise on Succession," p. 93.), it has been enacted that all landed properties below sixty-six acres shall be indivisible. The governments of Bavaria and Nassau have also found it necessary to impose a legal limit to subdivision, and the Prussian government unsuccessfully proposed the same to the states of its Rhenish provinces.

among the body of landholders, will balance the subdivision of the land by the equal succession of children." But this could, of course, only produce the adequate effect by such a limitation to population to two children per family as we have mentioned. Accordingly, we find from Mr. Laing that several checks to marriage exist in Norway. One is the ceremony of betrothal, by which marriage is often postponed for three or four years. Then again, "the standard of living for a labourer's family being high, and the minimum of accommodation required, according to the notions and customs of the country, being considerable, the unmarried must wait as house-servants, until a 'house-man's' place falls vacant, before they can marry." There is, however, the counterbalancing circumstance that, under such a system, illegitimate children will probably be numerous; and Mr. Laing states the proportion to be one in five. Sismondi says, "Each improvement in agricultural knowledge admits of another step in the subdivision of property. But there is no danger lest the proprietor should carry this too far. He knows exactly what inheritance he has to leave his children; he knows that the law will divide it equally among them; he sees the limit beyond which this division would make them descend from the rank which he has himself filled; and a just family pride, common to the peasant and to the nobleman, makes him abstain from summoning into life children for whom he cannot properly provide. If more are born, at least they do not marry, or they agree among themselves which of the several brothers shall perpetuate the family." Under such a system of restraint on population as is described in the above extract, peasant-estates may, of course, be transmitted, undiminished in extent, from sire to son; but such a system is not contemplated, and would not be faced by the great majority of writers

with whom peasant proprietorship is the panacea for our social ills.

“But,” it will be said, “there is the second alternative, which involves no such unnatural restraint, for one son to take the estate, and the others to seek their living in other occupations or professions.” True: let us examine this prescription. Now it is evident that either the eldest son takes the estate in fee simple, and leaves the other sons nothing,—in which case it is simply and barely our system of primogeniture,—or he takes merely the land, and pays his brothers their portion in money; and this is what is generally done where further subdivision is admitted to be unadvisable. But where is the portion-money to come from? It can clearly be raised only by mortgaging the estate. Accordingly, we find that in almost every country where the law of equal inheritance prevails, the land is mortgaged to a frightful and most mischievous extent.* “Though the land itself is not divided and subdivided, the value of the land is, and with effects almost as prejudicial to social progress.” In the canton of Schaffhausen, the landed properties are almost all mortgaged; in Zurich we are told on the first authority that the indebtedness of the proprietors “borders on the incredible, so that only the intensest industry, frugality, and temperance, and complete freedom of commerce, enable them to stand their ground.” In Prussia the same evil prevails, though to a less degree—the law of equal inheritance having barely existed during a generation and a half; but in France the registered mortgages amounted in 1849 to the enormous sum of 560 millions sterling, 400 millions of which was estimated to be upon the *land* alone; and the main portion, indeed nearly the whole,

* For a curious confirmation of this case in a country where land is cheap and plentiful, see Johnston’s “Notes on North America,” vol. i. p. 347. *et seq.*

of this enormous debt has been incurred in the course of fifty years, or less than two generations!

"The great evil," says Mr. Laing (p. 99.), "of this universal indebtedness is, that the actual cultivator, although he may have the same extent of land as his predecessor, has not the same means to live, and to expend something on the comforts and conveniences of a civilised and advancing condition. He can make but a bare subsistence out of the estate for himself and his family, after paying the annuities or interest of the principal sum with which he bought out the other co-heirs. It is estimated by the authorities quoted above, that, after paying the interest of his debt and the government rates and taxes, the peasant proprietor in France has not, on an average, above three eighths of the yearly produce of his estate left for his own subsistence. On his death the burden on the estate is increased by an additional set of co-heirs" [in case, that is, of his having more than two children]. "This is a retrograde, not an advancing, condition of the agricultural population, which is the great mass of the social body. Each generation is worse off than the preceding one, although the land is neither more divided nor worse cultivated."

But it will be worse cultivated, because the power of the proprietor to do justice to it will diminish as his incumbrances augment. In all countries, a mortgaged proprietary is an impoverished body, and therefore incompetent to the due cultivation of the soil. We confess we see no cure for this sore evil, nor any check to its increase; for, be it remembered, peasant-farming, though it may afford a comfortable subsistence to a family, is not a lucrative occupation which will procure a man the means of paying off his incumbrances. We can discover no escape for France out of the slough into which the law of equal inheritance has plunged her, except by a limitation of the number of children to two, or a recurrence to the law of primogeniture; or, thirdly, by some such unhopèd-for and millennial development of commerce, or other Eldorado, as should enable the

younger sons, who have sought and found their fortune in the world, to purchase back the fee-simple of the estate from their embarrassed elder brother, and pay off all the incumbrance; in which case, of course, the now envied proprietor must in his turn go forth to seek his living, or sink at once to the condition of a day-labourer or a pauper. Can imagination, even, picture any fourth way of salvation?

But, passing over this dreadful and apparently almost incurable social malady of a burdened and mortgaged proprietary, how does the law of equal inheritance, and the consequent partition of the soil among peasant proprietors, even when not carried to excess, operate upon the prospects of those younger sons, who receive their portion of the paternal acres in money, and go forth to seek other occupation?—a branch of the question which, vital and momentous as it is, has been hitherto almost entirely overlooked. These other occupations may be classed under the heads of agricultural labour, various branches of industry and handicrafts, and the civil or military service of the State. Let us see in what way the division of the soil among small proprietors affects the demand for hands in these various departments. For hired agricultural labour there can, of course, be no demand; each family cultivating its own land by its own members, neither needs, as we have seen, nor can afford to pay for, any extra hands. This prolific source of employment is therefore altogether cut off. An extract or two from the great admirers of the system, will give us the means of estimating its operation on the demand for manufacturing or skilled labour in other branches. “*Le paysan qui fait avec ses enfans tout l’ouvrage de son petit héritage, qui ne paie de fermage à personne au dessus de lui, ni de salaire à personne au dessous, qui règle sa production sur sa consommation, qui mange son propre blé, boit*

son propre vin, se revêt de son chanvre et de ses laines, se soucie peu de connaître les prix du marché, car il a peu à vendre et peu à acheter." (*Sismondi, Econ. Polit. Essai iii.*) "The tendency of peasant proprietors," says Mr. Mill, "and of those who hope to become proprietors, is rather towards penuriousness than prodigality. They deny themselves reasonable indulgences, and live wretchedly, in order to economise. In Switzerland almost everybody saves who has any means of saving. The case of the Flemish farmers I have already noticed. Among the French, though a pleasure-loving, and reputed to be a self-indulgent, people, the spirit of thrift is diffused through the rural population." In all countries where the system has been long established—in Schleswig, in the Rhenish provinces, in Auvergne, in Norway, and in many parts of the interior of Germany—domestic manufactures are its invariable concomitant. The family grow, spin, weave, and dye their own wool and their own flax, and generally make their own clothes.

"This is a social state," observes Mr. Laing, "which affords no markets, no consumption, no demand for the productions of the ingenuity, skill, and enterprise of other people. All are producers of nearly all they consume, and no class is wealthy enough to set to work a class of producers of objects required for their participation. There can be little interchange of industry, for all are employed equally in producing what they consume. There can be no important home markets for agricultural products, and none for the many products for which great combinations of skill, machinery, and the co-operative labour of body and mind are required, and which are the enjoyments and tastes of civilised life. Where manufactures have been established, as in Switzerland, Belgium, and on the Rhine, it is not upon any consumption at home that they depend, but on the foreign market"—[upon countries, that is, where peasant proprietorship, either does not exist, or has not had time to produce the same effects as at home]. "In the social state of

Britain it is the reverse. The interchange of industry for industry among the individual producers in our social state is a perpetual animating principle, like the circulation of the blood in the human frame. But this interchange, this living by each other, and dependence on each other, is necessarily inconsiderable in the other social state, where each family is a self-supporting isolated unit, living a kind of Robinson Crusoe life on its own patch of land, producing, in a rough way, all its wants, and going without what it cannot produce. . . . In this social state employment does not keep pace with the increase of population, however small; for as every family is producing, generally speaking, all it consumes, by its own labour in the field or at the fireside, the market for the products of those ordinary trades and handicrafts which employ the great mass of the working population in the old social state is limited, and is necessarily falling off, and not increasing, with the increase of population, because that increase brings a diminution, and not an increase, of the means to consume and give employment. Each family, as its numbers increase, must necessarily give up more and more in each succeeding generation the use of, and taste for, those objects which it cannot produce at home. The man whose father employed the tailor and shoemaker, and their dependent branches of industry, can now only afford to wear home-made clothes and shoes."

It may be urged that peasant proprietorship need not lead to domestic manufactures. We can only reply that it always has done, and, we believe, inevitably will. The same disposition which induces the peasant owner to bestow his spare and extra hours in *petits soins* on his own farm, rather than exchange them for moderate payment on the large farm of his neighbour, will prompt him to employ them in tanning his own skins and making his own shoes, in preference to paying his neighbour the tanner, or his friend the shoemaker, for doing these things for him. Then his wife and daughters will have many leisure hours, many long winter evenings, when their help in the field is not wanted; and the same economic disposition, the same

habit of turning everything to account, the same feeling of proprietorship, which everywhere characterise this class, will be certain to make them employ these hours in carding their own wool, in spinning their own flax, in dyeing the produce of their own loom, in making the garments of their husbands and their children, rather than in idleness or in reading, either of which would involve payment to others for doing that which might so easily be done gratuitously at home. The connection between peasant proprietorship and domestic manufactures may not be one of logical necessity, but it is assuredly one of universal and certain concomitance.

So much for the effect of the subdivision of land on the useful arts, which, as a department of industry supporting a large distinct class, it must in time wholly obliterate. Its operation on the fine arts, on those branches of industry which are devoted to the production of the luxuries and elegances of life, will be precisely similar. Its first and most certain operation is to extinguish the spending class. It reduces the whole community to one uniform level of moderate competence, with no superfluous income to throw away. By its discouragement of manufacturing enterprise it throws a greater number of hands into the department of that ornamental industry which only a rich and spending class could afford to maintain; and then, by obliterating this class, it cuts away the ground from these artisans altogether.

“The small owners of land,” says Mr. Laing, “more and more burdened with debt in each generation, can afford to buy less, and not more, of the comforts and conveniences of life; and, consequently, the home market for the products of the useful arts, and the taste for enjoying them, are diminishing along with the means of the great mass of the population to indulge in them. . . . The class of workmen in the ordinary crafts who, in a sound state of society, should find constant employment and a good living in supplying the agricultural class with the objects of the useful arts, are, from the want of means

among that class to consume, thrown upon production in the ornamental arts in greater number than the home or foreign markets require, or can absorb. . . . The tastes for the habits, comforts, gratifications, and refinements of a higher state of civilisation are wanting, because the means to form those tastes are wanting; and the classes in the social body who can afford to indulge in them and pay for them are wanting."

The same remarks will apply to those conveniences and luxuries which are the results of foreign commerce. These are only to be purchased by exchanging for them the surplus products of native industry. But, as we have seen, the inevitable and invariable tendency of peasant proprietorship is to diminish, and ultimately to extinguish, this exchangeable surplus, each family producing, every generation, more nearly all it needs, and consuming more nearly all it produces. The complete establishment of the system will, therefore, be coincident with the entire extinction of foreign commerce. It seems to us equally impossible to avoid this conclusion, as a logical result, or, when we examine the household life of a Swiss or German peasant owner, to shut our eyes to it as an accomplished or approaching fact. These people are clothed in woollen and linen garments, the products of their own farm and looms; they consume no tea; their coffee is nearly all chicory; their sugar is manufactured from beet-root; and their bad beer and sour wine are the growth of their own hop-garden and vineyard.

The system of equal inheritance and small ownership, then, cuts away from those whom it casts forth to seek a livelihood, the employments of agriculture, manufactures, commerce, and ornamental handicraft. The civil or military service of the State, the army or the bureau, are the only residual resources. How does the system operate on these? Obviously in the same direction. The servants of the State are paid by taxes levied on

the rest of the citizens; and the tendency of peasant proprietorship will be to diminish the surplus which each family can afford to pay to the tax-gatherer, just as it diminishes the surplus each can afford to spend in other ways. A nation of which all the people live on the produce of their estates, and up to that produce, or, as Laing expresses it, "produce all they consume, and consume all they produce," will obviously have less to bestow on its Government than one comprising within it a variety of classes, most of whom have a considerable surplus income to spend on luxuries and to meet the burden of taxation. But this is not all. In proportion as a nation consists of small proprietors, or approaches to that social condition, precisely in that proportion will taxation of necessity assume the form which of all others is the most vexatious, burdensome, and intolerable—the direct form. As foreign commerce, the import of foreign articles of luxury or convenience, dies away (as we have seen that it must do under the prevalence of this system), the source of revenue which is least felt, least annoying, and, under different circumstances, most prolific, viz. customs' duties, or the indirect taxes, is dried up. Its place must be supplied either by direct taxation, or by what is almost worse (and under peasant proprietorships could not long subsist), monopolies and excise. Thus the division of the land into small estates, even under its most favourable circumstances, operates, in the first place, to make an equal amount of taxation more burdensome, as being levied from a class which has no surplus income; and, in the second place, to necessitate the levying of this amount in the most burdensome and vexatious manner. The result of these two operations will, of course, be to cause the revenue to be reduced to the lowest possible amount whenever the people are free, and have a voice in the management of their own affairs. These conse-

quences have not yet followed to their full extent, it is true ; partly because in the chief countries of the Continent, peasant proprietorship is not yet universal, but is only on the road to become so, and partly because in these countries the people are, for the most part, still subject to despotic or bureaucratic rule. But the difficulty with which direct taxes can be levied upon a free people has been shown in no questionable manner both in America and in France in 1848 and 1849 : and that we have not exaggerated the tendency of the subdivision, as contra-distinguished from the aggregation, of landed property to substitute direct for indirect taxation, the following comparison will show. In Prussia the only returns we could obtain mix up the excise, customs, and stamps in a manner which makes our statement with respect to that country only a matter of approximation. In the continental countries a considerable proportion of the revenue is derived from crown lands, or national domains, &c., which will explain why the "total" is more than the sum of the three divisions in this table.

Countries.	Direct Taxes, including Stamps.	Per Centage of Total Revenue.	Excise and Salt Monopoly, &c.	Per Centage of Total Revenue.	Customs.	Per Centage of Total Revenue.	Total Revenue.
	£		£		£		£
France -	27,900,000	50	15,600,000	28	6,520,000	12	54,800,000
Austria -	4,500,000	33	4,000,000	29	1,550,000	11	13,500,000
Prussia -	3,150,000	41	1,800,000	23	1,500,000	20	7,700,000
Gt. Britain	16,000,000	30	14,000,000	26	21,060,000	40	53,000,000

Thus in England forty per cent. of our revenue is raised by indirect taxation, against twenty per cent. in Prussia, and twelve per cent. in France.

One result of this difference in the mode of taxation we can only just intimate here: to enter fully into it would lead us away from our main subject; but it is worthy of deep consideration. In England, and in most

cases where the chief part of the revenue is derived from customs' duties levied on imported articles, the working man is, or if he pleases, may be, almost wholly exempt from taxation. He pays no direct taxes whatever. He pays taxes on no article of necessity, except soap. He pays only on articles of luxury: on beer, wine, sugar, spirits, tea, coffee, tobacco. What he pays he pays of his own accord—of his own free choice—of his superfluity. But this never can be the case in an un-commercial country, and is not the case with the German or French peasant or artisan; however poor he be, he pays a poll-tax, a trade-tax, a class-tax, often a meat-tax; and if he lives in town, he pays the *octroi*, which is a tax on all articles of consumption, and most insufferably burdensome. These are taxes which he cannot escape at pleasure. Yet these are taxes which he might escape, if the social condition of the country admitted of raising a main part of the revenue from articles of importation, as with us. The subdivision of land, then, in its full and final operation, by making taxation more burdensome, will necessarily tend more and more to diminish its amount, and thus to curtail the number of servants whom the government, supported by this taxation, can afford to employ. Thus every mode of livelihood is, by the system of equal inheritance, cut away from under those exiles from the paternal nest, who must exist equally under this system as under the law of primogeniture, if the increase of population is to be suffered to continue.

It may at first sight appear a surprising conclusion that a system of which the first and most apparent result is to augment the produce of the soil, and, in consequence, the numbers whom that soil is capable of maintaining, should yet, in its ultimate issue, be unfavourable to the increase of those numbers, by destroying at its source the fund out of which other branches

of industry are to be supported. But our surprise will vanish, and our confidence in the soundness of the conclusion to which our reasoning has led will be confirmed, when we reflect that the subdivision of landed property is, at least in its secondary operation, directly at variance with that principle of political economy, the most certain and irrefragable which that science has brought to light, which proclaims that division of labour, and the combination of divided labour, are essential to full efficiency of production. In other words, the extra labour which the peasant proprietor and his family bestow upon their land, and by means of which its extra produce is obtained, is less effective—*i. e.* produces, ultimately, a smaller return than it would do if otherwise applied ; that the aggregate result of the labour of two brothers, for example, is less where both are employed at home upon minute tillage of the patrimonial estate, than it would be were one of them diverted to the production of some other article which might be exchanged against the labour of the other. In this simple consideration lies, as we conceive, the key to the whole mystery—the solution of one of the knottiest, most vital, and most interesting problems propounded to the nineteenth century.

To sum up the whole, the law of equal inheritance implies and involves a stationary, or nearly stationary, state of the population—a state that with each generation must become more and more stationary, as the yield from a given acreage is brought more and more nearly to the maximum of possibility. It is true that if the population is thus kept stationary, it may exist in great comfort and respectability ; but, granted that postulate, so it might equally under the law of primogeniture. Nay, as we have just seen, the aggregate population that can be subsisted in the same degree of comfort will be greater under the latter than under the former law—in the present condition of the world, at

least; because the latter is favourable, and the former unfavourable, to that division of employments by which alone their maximum of productiveness can be arrived at.

Of all modern writers on the subdivision of land, Mr. Kay* is the most enamoured of its advantages, and the most unconscious of its drawbacks and defects. He sees only its present consequences, and is blind to its ultimate operation. He paints its beauties in glowing colours, and entirely ignores its dangers and deformities. We agree in almost all his representations of fact, but we are inclined to quarrel with his omissions, and to question the justice and completeness of his inferences. He brings an overwhelming mass of testimony to prove the admirable effects which the subdivision of land, and the facility with which small portions of it may be obtained, have produced in Prussia, Saxony, and in many parts of Switzerland, in improving the cultivation of the soil, in raising the condition and style of living among the peasantry, and in promoting habits of forethought, economy, industry, and self-restraint, throughout the population generally. The desire to rise into the position of proprietors stimulates the energy of the labourer, renders him cautious, frugal, and sober, and makes him postpone marriage till he is in a condition to maintain a family. In many of these countries, we are told, "the men never marry before the age of twenty-five, and the women seldom till thirty." The average age of marriage in Prussia Mr. Kay states at thirty-five. The desire of the proprietor, again, to retain his position, and if possible to amend it, promotes the growth of similar virtues in him; while the anxiety to transmit his hardly-earned estate undiminished to his children induces him to limit the number of them. By the joint operation of these motives the rate of increase of the

* The Social Condition of the People in England and in Europe. By Joseph Kay, Esq., M.A. Longmans. 1850.

population is greatly reduced: a position which the author endeavours to strengthen by means of several statistical tables, which, however, contradict one another, and by no means always bear out his conclusions. Mr. Kay also draws vivid contrasts between the pauperism of England and the comparative freedom from this sore of several of the continental countries, and between the condition of the peasantry in countries which are differently situated in respect to their social institutions—in Bohemia and Saxony, for example, in the Netherlands and in Rhenish Prussia, in the Catholic and Protestant cantons of Switzerland.

Now, if we were disposed to lose sight of the main question in a criticism of particular errors, we might show that religion, education, and race, have at least as much to do with these contrasts as the law of equal inheritance. We might remind Mr. Kay that the Saxons and Bohemians are distinct people—distinct in blood, in language, in religion; the former being a Teutonic, the latter a Slavonic race; the former being Protestants, the latter Catholics. We might remind him that the small farms of Rhenish Prussia are held by proprietors, and those of Flanders (which are at least equally well cultivated and by at least as prosperous and frugal a people) by rent-paying tenants; and that the Catholic and Reformed cantons of Switzerland, so contrasted in the condition of their peasants and the state of their agriculture, acknowledge the same law of equal inheritance. We might remind him that in no country of central Europe is the land more subdivided, or worse cultivated, than in many parts of France, or the Sardinian States. We might remind him that a vast improvement in the education of Germany has been coincident with the improvement in the condition of her poor, and may have been as effective a cause of it as the acquisibility of land. But to dwell on these things

would divert our attention from the heart and marrow of the question, and we therefore pass them by. We will admit that in almost every country, except France, in which small properties prevail, the land is admirably cultivated—with extreme care, if with little economy and little science; we will admit that since the promulgation of the new system in Prussia, by which feudalism was broken up, and large estates begun to be superseded by smaller ones, the improvement in agriculture and in the condition of the peasant class has been marked, vast, and undeniable. We will concede, moreover, that much of this amelioration is the effect, and the natural and necessary effect, of the change from proletarianism to proprietorship; and that, *ceteris paribus*, land will always yield more to the hand of the owner than to hired labour. But all this improvement is but the first effect of the transition from a system of slovenly to one of careful culture; from a system which paralysed the energies of the peasant to a system which stimulates them; from a system under which neither owner nor labourer did their duty to the land, under which it enjoyed the full benefits neither of science nor of industry, to a system under which all unite to develop its capabilities; it is, in fact, the simple result of a transition from bad farming to good, and might easily have been foreseen. But the question for the philosophic statesman regards a future day and a secondary consequence. When the old system shall have been altogether superseded by the new—when the whole of the soil shall be in the hands of peasant proprietors—when industry, science, and the due subdivision of the land shall have brought it all into that state of minute and perfect cultivation which we observe in many parts of Lombardy, of Flanders, and of Switzerland, and which two generations of peasant proprietorship suffices to effect—what then? No new estates can be created,

for you have reached the limit at which subdivision is compatible with good agriculture or with comfortable subsistence; no more individuals can be supported from the soil, for its utmost yield has been already extracted from it; manufacturing establishments have been superseded by articles produced at home*; foreign commerce has languished and died under the gradual extinction of exchangeable articles, and available surplus for luxurious expenditure; and the civil and military services have been reduced to a minimum, because only a small revenue can even be raised by direct taxation from a nation which consists only of one vast class of yeomen. Whence, then, are the younger children, the increase of the population, to derive their subsistence? It is abundantly obvious that no such increase is possible, no such younger children are permissible.

Thus we see that the law of equal inheritance, the system of peasant proprietorship, which is recommended by some superficial reasoners as enabling population to augment without peril, and by others, deeper and more clear-headed, as limiting this augmentation, does not solve the great problem of social philosophy: viz., how to reconcile an increasing population with an increasing aggregate or average of comfort. It only cuts the Gordian knot which its votaries conceive it to untie. It is monstrous to see grown men thus running about

* Mr. Kay speaks, in more than one place, in high admiration of the plan adopted by many of the Prussian peasants, of hiring themselves to adjacent landowners, till, out of their wages, they have laid by a sufficient sum to become proprietors themselves. He entirely forgets that this resource belongs only to a transition state; and that when all the land is owned in small properties and cultivated by the labour of the family who own it, the landless peasant will find no demand for his services, and, consequently, no access to proprietorship. As long as the process is unfinished, all will go well; it is when it reaches or approaches its completion that the real pressure will be felt.

to catch their bird by putting salt upon its tail. The plan is recommended to us by its ablest advocates because it leads to the postponement of marriage, and checks the multiplication of mankind. Now, we do not enter here into the question whether this enforced restraint, and the stationary state which would result from it, be objects to be feared or to be desired. We will not ask ourselves whether this self-denial, when universally practised and carried to the degree necessary to obtain its end, be not very much *propter vitam vivendi perdere causas*. We will, for the present, put aside the reflection which cannot fail to arise in all our minds, whether the discovery of some system which shall render compatible with prudence and with social duty the early formation of those domestic ties which form the charm and the reward of life, would not be a worthier aim for the philosophic statesman than the establishment of a social state which postpones these enjoyments till existence has begun to fade and wane, till feeling has grown dull, and habit has hardened into unsocial temper and unpliant will. We will pass over all this, and will merely observe that, if this severe and general restraint upon multiplication is to be enforced under the system of equal inheritance, any other system would afford at least as good a chance of a happy and prosperous population. If our labouring classes now would only restrict their numbers as tightly and systematically as peasant proprietors are assumed by their advocates to do (and as they must do in order to succeed), it is certain that their social condition would rapidly become, at least, as enviable and as much improved; it is even probable, as we have seen, that a less severe restriction of their numbers would suffice.

So much for the strictly economic part of the question. We now proceed to inquire into its social and

political results; and in doing so we shall examine it chiefly as it appears in France, because in that country its operation is more completely unchecked than in any other by the yet lingering influence of those counter-acting institutions which elsewhere serve to conceal its inevitable tendencies, and to postpone the period at which these will be fully consummated and exposed to view. We shall, of course, glance at other continental countries as we go along, for the purpose of showing that the same cause operates everywhere in the same manner, in exact proportion as its tendencies are allowed their free and unrestrained development.

The desire to possess land, to become actual proprietor of a portion, however small, of the globe that we inhabit, seems natural to all classes, and prevails in every country. In England it has shown itself in a thousand ways, and in none more clearly than in the eagerness with which thousands of our industrious and saving artisans rushed forward to immolate themselves to Feargus O'Connor's Land Scheme. In Ireland the same feeling leads to daily bloodshed and murder. In Norway, in Flanders, in Switzerland, in Prussia, the desire for land among the peasantry prevails over almost every other wish. But it is chiefly in the Frenchman that this desire becomes an absolute and blind passion,—the stronger that it is complicated with, and confirmed by, his political affections. Even when the property is too small to admit, without mischief, of further subdivision, the co-heirs are, each of them, so unwilling to lose their hold upon it, that the one who ultimately retains it has to buy out the others at a price very disproportionate to the real value of their shares. Often this arrangement is not effected at all, and the consequence may be seen as we pass in a diligence along the road. “A property,” we are told, “which has been divided between two or three heirs,

may not, after its division, consist of only two or three distinct portions, but may very probably be divided into six, eight, or a dozen such. This arises from the fact of the co-heirs being all anxious, when the land is of various qualities, and devoted to different purposes, to have a share of each variety; that is, to have equal portions of rich land, meadow, woodland, vineyard, &c. The extent to which this sort of subdivision is sometimes carried would hardly be credited, except upon the highest authority. It appears, for example, from the returns under the official survey, that the commune of Argenteuil, comprising 3830 acres, is distributed into the extraordinary number of 36,883 separate parcels! This, we presume, may be taken as a specimen of what M. de Tocqueville calls, 'grinding the land into the impalpable powder of democracy.' "

The degree in which the natural desire for land has, with the French peasant, degenerated into an unreasoning passion, is well described by several French writers, but by none more vividly than by Michelet in the opening chapter of his wild and absurd rhapsody called "Le Peuple :"—

" Si nous voulons connaître la pensée intime, la passion du paysan de France, cela est fort aisé. Promenons-nous le dimanche dans la campagne, suivons-le. Le voilà quis'en va là-bas devant nous. Il est deux heures; sa femme est à vêpres; il est endimanché; je réponds qu'il va voir sa maîtresse.

" Quelle maîtresse? Sa terre.

" Je ne dis pas qu'il y aille tout droit. Non, ce jour-là il est libre, il est maître d'y aller ou de n'y pas aller. N'y va-t-il pas assez tous les jours de la semaine? Aussi, il se détourne, il va ailleurs, il a affaire ailleurs. Et pourtant, il y va.

" Il est vrai qu'il passait bien près; c'était une occasion. Il la regarde, mais apparemment il n'y entrera pas; qu'y feruit-il? Et pourtant, il y entre.

" Du moins, il est probable qu'il n'y travaillera pas; il est endimanché; il a blouse et chemise blanches. Rien n'empêche

cependant d'ôter quelque mauvaise herbe, de réjeter cette pierre. Il y a bien encore cette souche qui gêne, mais il n'a pas sa pioche; ce sera pour demain.

"Alors, il croise ses bras et s'arrête, regarde, sérieux, soucieux. Il régarde longtemps, très longtemps, et semble s'oublier. A la fin, s'il se croit observé, s'il aperçoit un passant, il s'éloigne à pas lents. A trente pas encore, il s'arrête, se retourne, et jette sur sa terre un dernier regard, regard profond et sombre, mais tout passionné, tout de cœur, plein de dévotion."

The first consequence of this overweening desire for land, is to run up the price to an inordinate degree. Estates which naturally, and sold as a whole, would only bring twenty-five years' purchase, will, if divided into small plots, fetch readily forty years' purchase. So well is this known, that if a property of any considerable size comes into the market, it is almost always purchased by some notary or attorney, who then resells it in small lots to peasant proprietors at an enormous profit. But as his customers are seldom or never able to pay him the whole of the purchase-money, he retains a mortgage upon all the petty properties for the unpaid portion; the sum that he receives from them in ready money generally repaying him the whole original outlay, and leaving him still the legal and gratuitous possessor of the soil. Then, as Michelet says, the small landed property of the peasant has this dangerous and fascinating quality: "it is always *incomplete*; it always wants enlarging—a little corner here, a little addition there, to make it perfect." For this enlargement the peasant sometimes lays by, but far oftener *borrow*s; and this process continues till his debt makes his proprietorship little more than nominal. He has no idea of any other mode of investing his savings than by buying more land. Even in Auvergne, where the properties are larger, and the proprietors often prosperous, whatever can be earned, or laid by, is spent in

the purchase of an adjoining field, at a price often far beyond its real value. The habit of borrowing at five or six per cent. to purchase land, which will not yield above *two* per cent. of return, is very general, and can end only in ruin.* The property must in the end come into the hands of the mortgagees, and the proprietor must become a labourer, a pauper, and a mal-content. This passion has not only the effect of turning the attention of the agriculturist from all other investments, and so starving other branches of industry, but it leads him to regard the purchase of land, not as a mode of employing his money which is to yield him a return, but as an outlay for the gratification of fancy; he buys a field as a wealthy Englishman buys a picture, as the indulgence of a luxurious taste.

We see the same effect in other countries, though scarcely in so excessive a degree. Mr. Banfield informs us that along the Rhine such is the rage of the peasants for land, that they do not scruple to give 120*l.* and 150*l.* an acre for it, and this in a country far poorer than ours. They never, he says, bestow a thought on the interest or the profit to be made by such investments. They look only, like the Irishman, to the means of subsistence it may afford them, however wretched and inadequate this subsistence may be. In fact, it is this exclusive attention to the soil as the sole, or the most agreeable, mode of livelihood, that leads alike to rack-rents in Ireland, and to the absurdly extravagant price of land in many parts of the Continent; and, in both cases, the misery and disappointment of the peasant must equally ensue. Sismondi gives the same testimony as to Switzerland:— "*Le paysan a vivement le sentiment de ce bonheur attaché à la condition de propriétaire. Aussi est il toujours empressé d'acheter de la*

* See Michelet, p. 24.

terre à tout prix. Il la paie plus qu'elle ne vaut, plus qu'elle ne lui rendra peut-être." Now, it is quite impossible that the disappointment and discontent which must result from this habit of giving more for land than it is worth, and, of course, expecting more from it than it can yield, added to the embarrassment and dependence consequent upon the general "indebtedness" inseparable from the mortgage system we have described, should not produce some of the worst social and political effects—effects which, as we shall see, will meet us at every step of our inquiry.

There is no point on which the advocates of the subdivision of land dwell more strongly, or with greater confidence, than on its supposed tendency to promote among the people reverence for property, and a spirit of political conservatism. No author makes more of this than Mr. Kay. "Wherever," says he, "this system prevails, we find a general and profound respect for that property in which they are themselves sharers, very different from the habits of injury, waste, and dilapidation so often manifested by the English poor; and, in addition, a great disinclination to political agitation, and all rash and ill-considered political changes." Mill and Sismondi hold the same opinion. It seems, on the face of it, natural and certain that the possession of property should bring along with it respect for the institution of property, as well as regard for what belongs to others. It seems almost equally clear that the more property is spread among the community, the more all classes will be interested in the maintenance of that internal peace and tranquillity by which alone the security of property can be insured, and its resources fully developed; and that revolutions will be less probable and less frequent in exact proportion as the number who may gain by a convulsion

is diminished, and the number who must lose by it is increased; in other words, in proportion as the class of *propriétaires* multiplies, and the class of *prolétaires* dwindles away. That such results will ensue from the subdivision of land seems, at first sight, so obvious, that we feel disposed to concede the point without examination, and to take for granted the accuracy of the statement. But we are met by the startling fact that, in England, the land *par excellence* of aristocracy and primogeniture, not only is the highest ground taken by all our writers as to the sacredness of property as an institution, but the most sensitive respect to it, as a fact, is manifested by all classes of our people; and at the first rumour of an attack upon it, either in the abstract or the concrete, the whole population is up in arms. An almost slavish reverence for property distinguishes our law, and pervades our national character. Whereas, in France, where subdivision of land is carried to its highest point, where *five-sevenths* of the families are proprietors either of land or other real property, not only have the most outrageous and indefensible assaults on the property of individuals and classes been perpetrated in the most recent times; not only have the savings' banks been robbed and the wealthy mulcted in forced loans, but doctrines the most subversive of the rights and even of the institutions of property have been preached without reprobation, and have been hailed with transport by hundreds of thousands of admiring votaries, prepared to carry them into instant practice. The levelling and despoiling theories of socialism and communism have taken a hold on the popular mind of France, unparalleled in any other country. Emile Thomas, in his national *ateliers*, robbed the rich to lavish on the poor, and the poor to lavish on the still poorer, while Proudhon proclaimed that "all property is theft;" and instead of being punished

as a public enemy, or incarcerated as a madman, he is hailed as the founder of a sect, and adored almost as a saint.

The supposed conservative and tranquillising tendency of the law of equal inheritance meets also, apparently, with a similar surprising contradiction. In Switzerland, where the peasant proprietorship had prevailed for centuries, and was imagined to have been crowned with the most complete and unalloyed success, the year 1847 witnessed a series of servile insurrections, miniature revolutions, and, at last, actual civil war; the pervading feature of the fermentation being a conflict between the better and more comfortable classes and those who had little or not enough, and who hoped to mend matters by seizing on the government themselves. Then, in France, in Sardinia, in Austria, and throughout Germany—in almost every country, in fact, where the subdivision of land has been carried to any great extent—the most complete and often bloody revolutions occupied the whole of 1848; revolutions, be it observed, less political than social (for we have put aside those cases where popular feeling was complicated with hatred towards a foreign domination)—revolutions which consisted not in rebellions against an unpopular dynasty, but in discontent with, and insurrection against, the arrangements of society. During this whole series of political convulsions, Spain and Russia—the lands of magnates and grandees—were undisturbed save by cabinet quarrellings and ministerial intrigues; while England, where a peasant proprietor is as rare as a black swan, and where even the old class of yeomen is nearly as extinct as the mammoth or the dodo—England, full of refugees from every continental country, and swarming with native agitators and Chartist malcontents, saw the storm pass

and the ripple on the surface of her tranquil vision.

These respective phenomena—so different from what would have been predicted—so inconsistent with the supposed conservative tendencies of landed subdivision—will lead us to look a little deeper into the question, and may lead us to something in the truth. Indeed, the explanation of the apparent anomaly does not seem difficult to discover. The subdivision of the land among the numerous branches in the security of property and the preservation of order *all who inherit and retain a sufficient portion of the land*: but upon those who are exceptions to this rule—upon those whose parents were too poor or too unfortunate to have land to leave them—upon those younger branches who, not being able to extract a maintenance out of their fraction of the patrimonial estate, have parted with it for money, and then perhaps spent that money—upon all those the operation of the system is diametrically reversed. They find (as we showed in our examination of the economical working of the law) almost every avenue to wealth, or even competence, closed to them, or already choked up by other competitors; they find all branches of industry and commerce contracted and curtailed under that want of a home-demand for luxuries and manufactured articles, which we have seen to be one of the most certain of the secondary consequences of the law of equal inheritance; they find the government obliged yearly to diminish its expenditure, and reduce the number or the remuneration of its servants, as the taxes become more and more difficult to levy from a community of peasant proprietors, whose *nature* it is to have no surplus available either for the merchant or the tax-gatherer. Unless, therefore, population becomes stationary, the claimants on all the secondary means of livelihood increase, as these various

means contract or are starved to death by an enforced economy. Year by year these disappointed claimants swell the numbers of that class who are enemies of property because they have none, and to whom any change, any convulsion, offers a prospect of advantage, and can scarcely place in a worse position than before. Thus, the ultimate tendency of the law of subdivision is to make the peasant proprietors the *only* class in the community who are interested in the sacredness of property, and in the preservation of order and existing institutions. It increases the number of those interested in *this kind* of property, it is true; but at the same time it strikes at the root of all *other* property, by destroying the value of all other kinds of labour. It multiplies and satisfies one class, but damages and dissatisfies every other; and can, therefore, be wholly safe only when the satisfied class comprises the whole community. If there are two sons to inherit a small property, it leaves the one, *perhaps*, comfortable and contented, but sends the other forth—a malcontent by necessity, because otiose and resourceless—to swell the ranks out of which Socialists, insurgents, and Red Republicans are recruited, when the day of opportunity arrives.

But *is* even the peasant proprietor himself so uniformly contented and conservative, so imbued with the reverence due to *all kinds* of property, as he is represented to be? Let Michelet—a Frenchman, and a fanatic in this cause—answer the question. We shall see that he is at issue with Mr. Kay, with Sismondi, and with Laing; but we have little doubt he is, in the main, correct.

The peasant proprietor, we must remark, is always pinched, and generally embarrassed in his circumstances. We have seen that he is almost always mortgaged, having had to borrow (in order either to add

to his farm, or to pay off the portions of his brothers and sisters) "at seven, eight, and ten per cent.," says Michelet; but we will be content with assuming the usual interest at six per cent. To meet so heavy a drain, his work and his frugality must both be excessive. We quote from Michelet: "Watch him before daylight; you will find him at work, with all his family; even his wife, scarcely out of her confinement, creeps along the dewy earth. At noon, when rocks split with the heat, when the planter's negro gets repose, the volunteer negro takes none. Behold his food, and compare it with the artisan's; the latter feeds better every day than the peasant on Sunday. This heroic man thinks that by the power of his will he can do anything—even make war with Time. But Time is not to be vanquished; the struggle continues between usury, which time accumulates, and the strength of man, which it diminishes. The land brings him in two per cent., and usury demands eight. . . . Are you now surprised that this Frenchman, this merry singer of former days, no longer smiles? Are you surprised if, meeting him on the land which devours him, you find him so gloomy? In passing, you salute him cordially; he will not see you; he slouches his hat. Do not ask him the way; if he answers he may misdirect you. . . . Thus the peasant becomes more and more bitter and reserved. His heart is too much oppressed to open it to any sentiment of benevolence. *He hates the rich, his neighbour, and the world.* Alone, on this miserable property, as on a desert island, he becomes a savage. His insociability, proceeding from the feeling of his misery, is irremediable."

A man such as Michelet here describes, proprietor though he be, will be no strenuous defender of institutions under which he is what he is. He is exactly in

the state to lend a ready ear to any wild theorist, any millennial preacher, any designing agitator. He is just in the frame of mind when "the Devil, out of our melancholy and our weaknesses, abuses us to damn us." He is precisely fit to be the easy prey of the socialist emissary or the secret conspirator—of the Proudhons, the Louis Blancs, the Fouriers, the Cabets, and the Blanquis. Accordingly, we find in his advocate and admirer the following direct assault on the sacredness of property and the first principles of common honesty. It is M. Michelet, a writer of no small influence, an historian of no mean reputation, a professor of established rank, who is not ashamed thus clearly to intimate that the interest of money, when inconveniently burdensome, ought not to be paid, because it is the peasant who borrows, and the Jew and the banker who lends. "The people is noble; Europe has remained plebeian. But we must take serious measures for defending this nobility: it is in danger. The peasant, becoming the serf of the usurer, will be not only miserable, but will lose heart. Think you that man, a sad, restless, trembling debtor, afraid to meet his creditor, and skulking about, can preserve much courage? How would it be with a race thus brought up, in awe of the Jew? . . . *The laws must be altered; law must undergo this high, moral, and political necessity.*

. . . If the present state of things continues, the peasant, far from acquiring, must sell, as he did in the seventeenth century, and become once more a hireling. That would be the downfall, not of a class, but of our country. They pay 500 millions (francs) yearly to the State, and 1000 millions to the usurer. . . .

"If you were Germans or Italians, I should say, 'Observe the rules of civil equity.' (!) *But you are France; you are not a nation only, but a principle—*

a great political principle. *It must be defended at any cost.*"

Is it possible to say in plainer language, "Defraud your creditors, repudiate your debts, rob the bank, trample public and private faith under your feet?" Truly it does appear to us that property, however widely it may be diffused, is neither safe, nor much respected, nor greatly merited in a country where doctrines such as these can be promulgated, in works addressed to the masses by eminent writers and metropolitan professors such as M. Michelet. And he is far from being single in his misty notions of integrity. Language almost as indefensible may be found in Louis Blanc, and in Eugene Sue and George Sand, the most popular and brilliant novelists in France.

The subdivision of land, then, it would appear, may strengthen the reverence of property in one class (though even this is by no means, as we see, uniform or certain), and may augment the numbers of that class, but it weakens this sentiment in all other classes, *as long as these classes continue to exist*. If there were no younger children; if all individuals in the community were proprietors of land, and if all these proprietors were unencumbered, then the system would unquestionably promote respect for the institution of property. But these are three vital, immense, and probably impossible postulates.

If the subdivision of the land introduces one conservative element into the constitution of society, it must not be forgotten that it extinguishes another. If it multiplies peasant proprietors, it destroys the aristocracy. Now, whatever be the various opinions we may entertain as to the use or desirableness of an aristocracy, we shall none of us be disposed to deny that, where its privileges are not excessive, and where its power is not abused, it is emphatically *the* conservative element in

society—the most conservative of all the ingredients of which society is composed. Whether, therefore, the law of equal inheritance is to be regarded as favourable or unfavourable to the stability of political institutions, will depend upon our decision of the question, whether a multitude of small proprietors, or a smaller and more combined number of great proprietors, are likely to be most hostile to change, and most powerful to resist it. A numerous body of small proprietors, spread over the whole country, and dividing among them the entire surface of the soil, will, no doubt, where they are prosperous and contented, form a substantial barrier to any violent or sudden changes in the national government and institutions. But even this proposition can only be admitted with considerable modifications. In the first place, the class of yeomen are seldom distinguished by any extraordinary intelligence out of their own immediate department; they take little interest in political questions, nor do they care about the solution of them, except in as far as they directly and manifestly affect their own position, and come into contact with their daily life. For speculative or party politics, they will trouble themselves but little; they neither feel the vivid interest in these matters that distinguishes the restless, intellectual, and excitable population of the towns; nor have they any of that tenacious devotion to old ideas and associations, which forms the main strength of conservatism among the adherents and dependants of a beloved and respected feudal aristocracy. They do not respond readily, nor awake easily, to any but mere material considerations. Any public convulsion which would imperil their property or augment their taxation, they might be relied upon for resisting, strenuously and doggedly, *as soon as they perceived its bearing*; but if they had nothing, or thought that they had nothing, to fear on this head, the expulsion of a dynasty, or the

change of one form of government for another, are matters which regard and would disturb them in a very slight degree.

Again, their resistance to any political changes will seldom be more than passive. They may manifest on occasion wonderful *vis inertiae*, but they will rarely rouse themselves to vigorous and aggressive effort. They are not a body who are accustomed to combined action, or to whom either action or combination would be easy; on the contrary, their whole condition is essentially one of unsociability, self-containment, and isolation. They have nothing of that prompt and energetic *esprit de corps* which belongs to parties trained by long usage, and compelled by their position to associate for self-defence against other powerful and conflicting interests. Hence they are no match for the restless and intelligent citizens of a metropolis, full of mental activity, masters of the whole science of political organisation, devoted to their leaders, and fanatical in their attachment to a watchword or a principle. The conservatism of the class of peasant proprietors, will seldom be more than *selfish* and *inert*, and, in consequence, limited and ineffectual. It is obvious how inferior in effective strength, in adequacy to meet and hold in check those elements of turbulence and movement which always exist in such vigour and abundance among the inhabitants of large towns, this conservatism must be, when compared with that of an hereditary aristocracy of vast possessions, living on their estates, surrounded by attached dependants, who respect them for their individual virtues, as well as for their ancestral name, sharing in all the intellectual activity of the age, versed in political science, trained to public life, to combined action, and to the invigorating discipline of party. It is true that an oppressive aristocracy, one which has alienated the affections, and trampled on the

rights of its vassals, which has neglected its duties and abused its powers, has a revolutionary as well as a conservative operation ; but the same may be said of an unprosperous and discontented class of peasant proprietors, which, as we have seen, may exist. To form a fair relative estimate of the political tendencies of the two institutions, we must compare them under circumstances in which both have been successful—in which both have duly discharged their functions and attained their ends.

Recent events in France have been strongly confirmatory of these views. The last revolution was effected in Paris without the slightest opposition from the supposed conservative element ; it was accepted by the *country* without remonstrance, almost with indifference ; and it was not till property was attacked, till the whole social structure was threatened with destruction, and *till new taxes were imposed*, that the rural population, the class of peasant proprietors, began to rouse itself, like a strong man after sleep, and march to the rescue of society, which, after all, they might have proved inadequate to save, without the exertions and fidelity of the standing army.

“ It was the old policy of France and Spain,” says Mr. Laing, “ to draw the nobility from their estates and country residences, where they were powerful, and might be formidable, and to introduce them to the expenses, honours, and dependence of a court life. The Revolution proved in France that this state policy had been carried too far. *No intermediate body with social influence had been left in the country.* Brittany and La Vendée alone had a resident class of nobles or country gentlemen, who were too poor to be attached to a splendid and expensive court ; and there alone was found a class to support the throne. A similar body of landed proprietors spread over France would have mediated as a third element between the throne and the people, and might have averted the horrors and anarchy of the Revolution. Every succeeding movement in France proves the

want of some third element in the social body, between the executive power and the people. To this want must be ascribed the influence of Paris in all its social action in France. The country has no third element, in its present social structure, between the governing and the governed. Paris alone is this third element for all France."

This extinction of an hereditary and powerful aristocracy, and the substitution of a numerous class of small proprietors, consequent upon the establishment of the law of equal inheritance, has generally been represented as favouring the interests of freedom. We question whether this is not a superficial, or, rather, a partial view of the matter. Thus much, at least, is certain: that those monarchs and statesmen, like Louis XIV., Frederick II., and Cardinal Richelieu, whose systematic policy it was to weaken, humble, and impoverish the nobles of their respective countries, did not act thus out of any tender regard for liberty or individual right. Their aim in sweeping away the aristocracy was to remove a barrier to the establishment of their own despotic power. This also is certain: that, of all old-established states, aristocratic England is the one where personal freedom is the most complete, and the most diffused among all classes; and that liberty of individual action is fettered and usurped in Republican France and in subdivided Germany to a degree which, to a Briton, would be scarcely distinguishable from slavery. This, finally, is certain: that in the two great crises of our national history, the two great epochs when English liberties were threatened, defended, and enlarged—the reigns of John and of Charles I.—it was our aristocracy and our country gentlemen who stood forth in the front ranks of the cause of popular rights. The Magna Charta was won by barons; the question of ship-money was tried by a Buckinghamshire squire; Pym, Hampden, and most of the leaders of the Long

Parliament, belonged to what was then termed the country party.

The truth we believe to be, that the extinction of an hereditary nobility, by removing the barrier between the people and the government, lays each of these parties more open to the assaults and encroachments of the other : the people will be more easily oppressed, and the government more easily overthrown. Where an aristocracy has been overbearing, cruel, and unjust, as has too often been the case, its destruction is the overthrow of a tyranny, but not necessarily the substitution of freedom : it may be, and often will be, a mere change of oppressors, and the new oppression may be more galling than the old. The stability of the government, as well as the liberty of the subject, depend upon other arrangements. The amount of personal freedom enjoyed by the individual, depends, as we shall presently see, almost entirely upon the question, whether municipal or bureaucratic institutions, self-government or functionarism, pervade the nation. Whatever, therefore, has a tendency to increase the number or rivet the hold of these functionaries, is, *ipso facto*, unfavourable to individual liberty ; and this is equally true whether the state is termed a republic or an empire. Now, the law of equal inheritance has a direct and most powerful tendency to increase the number of those public functionaries, who already swarm to such an extent in both Germany and France, as to interfere with freedom of action in almost every moment and every transaction of daily life. It is true, as we showed in the early part of this Paper, that the difficulty of levying a sufficient revenue on a community of small proprietors has, by starving the resources out of which these functionaries are paid, a strong counteracting tendency—a tendency which may, in the end, overpower the other. But the first effect is what we have stated : the difficulty of

finding remunerative employment in trade or handicraft, on which we have already dwelt so fully, creates such a multitude of claimants—of mendicants in fact—for the poorest post under government, that any reduction in their number has practically been found impossible. The French are compelled to retain their intolerable system of passports, because its abolition would deprive a large number of functionaries of their bread, and cause an outcry which no government dare to face. In the same manner they dare not revise their restrictive commercial policy, because such revision would entail a diminution of their vast army of *douaniers*; and those who would thus be thrown out of work, would go to swell the already formidable ranks of the turbulent and discontented, because unemployed and unfed, population of the towns—the *classes dangereuses* of Paris, Lyons, and Bordeaux. Thus no reduction in the number of the public functionaries can safely take place in France; while in Austria one curious but very natural consequence of the revolution has been actually to augment the pay of many of the officials, and thus very greatly, but also again very naturally, to disgust the tax-paying peasant proprietor.

But functionarism will be considered presently; our only concern with it here is in so far as it is fostered by peasant proprietorship and is inimical to freedom. The following remarks of Mr. Laing have much weight; though we would not be understood to indorse them all.

“Whatever be the form of government, a third element between the power of the state, and the physical force of the people, is indispensable for the security of freedom, and the stability of social institutions. The aristocracy, or the clergy of the Church of Rome, or both, formed this third element in the middle ages. With us, the class of capitalists, of men of high intellectual and moral character, displayed in situations of im-

portance, and the strong prestige in favour of birth, fortune, and manners, and of what we call the nobility and gentry—a class very different from the feudal aristocracy of the Continent, and depending for social influence on popular esteem, and not on royal favour—constitute this third element in our social structure. But no equivalent class, with social influence to stand between the monarchic and democratic elements in the social body, has formed itself, or can form itself, on the Continent, where the property of land, which is almost the only kind of property is universally distributed into small and almost equal portions. Where all are equal, or nearly so, no pre-eminent social influence is accorded to property; and the only influence remaining is that of military or civil authority held under the Crown or the executive power. The people have no independent representatives; no leaders or defenders of importance and weight, either with their own body or with their rulers; no influential organs of public opinion; nothing, in short, to oppose to misgovernment and oppression but physical force. This is a social state much nearer to a military despotism than to a free constitution. If we sit down, and try to sketch that social condition which practically must be, of all others, the least favourable to the establishment and permanence of free institutions, and to the liberty of a people, we come unexpectedly and unwillingly to the conclusion, that it is the social condition which approaches most nearly to a perfect equality. Liberty and equality! These are two elements which cannot co-exist in society. . . . A military [or civil] aristocracy is the only government applicable, or perhaps possible, in this social state of agrarian equality.”

Mr. Laing states his conclusions somewhat broadly, but thus much we must admit as unquestionable; that in almost every country where the aristocracy has been extinguished or sapped by the subdivision of the land, the interference of the civil authorities with individual action is most oppressive and intolerable, and wholly at variance with English notions of freedom; and that the very same characteristics of inertia, unintellectuality, and uncombiningness, which we have noticed as

rendering the class of small proprietors powerless against the energetic and revolutionary population of the towns, will render them equally defenceless against the encroaching and compressing influence of the governing powers.

But, at all events (it will be said), whether the law of equal inheritance be or be not favourable to political stability, and civil liberty, there can be no question that it operates powerfully to spread pacific dispositions among the people, and will in time, if persevered in, put an end to international wars. Nearly all writers, except Mr. Laing, having taken this view of the subject. "They suppose that war never can be the choice of a people generally possessed of property, and having a preponderating influence and voice in their own public affairs; because property, especially landed property, which cannot be concealed, suffers in war equally from friend and foe, by taxation or devastation; and where the great mass of the people are landed proprietors, having this obvious interest in avoiding war, the most self-willed government must be constrained, they conceive, to maintain peace." The view appears plausible at first sight, but we shall see reason to question its soundness when we look a little more closely into the secondary operation of this cherished law. The common error of the writers who have treated of this subject has been to look only at the operation of territorial subdivision upon one class of the community, and to ignore its effect upon all other classes. We are again driven back upon the inquiry, *What becomes of the younger sons?* Of those who receive their portion in money, because the patrimonial inheritance will not admit of further *morcellement*, and who go forth to seek their fortune, many flock to the towns to engage in some branch of industry or trade, and, on arriving there, they find, as we have shown, all these branches

not only already overstocked, but narrowed more and more every succeeding year by that peculiar operation of peasant proprietorship which we have just traced out in detail. Many more flock to the towns in the hope of obtaining some appointment under government — appointments against the number and the remuneration of which, as we have seen, the same peasant proprietorship necessarily wages an unceasing war. Michelet, in his work called "*Le Peuple*," draws a most pitiable picture of both these classes — of the disappointment which attends most of the aspirants, and of the paltry pittance on which even the successful competitors must be content to live. It is among these two classes that the war party find their readiest recruits; it is these who are loudest in echoing the war-cry, whensoever, by whomsoever, and on what pretext soever, it may be raised. Nothing can be more natural, nothing more inevitable; all other avenues to occupation and to wealth have met their advances with an impassable barrier or a rude repulse. Unless they see a chance of carving their fortune out of civil commotion, military service is the only thing left them to fall back upon. War opens to them a vista of the most brilliant possibilities. Behind them lie penury, obscurity, a hopeless struggle against adverse destiny; before them a career, bright and beckoning, of advancement, victory, and renown. Even in those cases where the patrimonial estate is large enough to afford a prospective inheritance to all the members of the family, the same result ensues, though by a rather different process.

"In almost every peasant proprietor's family," says Mr. Laing, "there are one or two grown-up young men, the sons and heirs of the labouring proprietor, who have no employment at home till the small estate becomes vacant by the death of their parents. Their additional labour is not required for its cultivation while the parent is able to work. It is, however, a secure living to

look to, and to fall back upon after the parents' death. This mass of population includes a large proportion of all the youth of France and Germany, of an age and habits suitable for military service. In France alone there are 10,282,946 landed proprietors. If we allow one-third of these to belong to heads of families, with sons grown up while the parent is still able to work and cultivate his little property, what a vast body of young men do we find, in this social state, ever ready and eager for military service and warfare! To learn a trade or handicraft which cannot subsist them until they have acquired it, and which they would have to abandon as soon as their little heritages fall to them, is by no means as suitable to their position in life, even in a prudential view, as to enter into military service, in which they are fed, clothed, and lodged from the very first day, are engaged for a term of years which they can very well spare, and are then free to return to their little heritages, or to re-engage according to their prospects. . . . War would thus seem to be a necessary sequence of the social state of those countries in which landed property is generally and almost equally distributed — war abroad, or tumult and revolution at home. This is clearly shown in Switzerland. The Swiss youth are scattered over Europe and America in various temporary employments, as servants, innkeepers, adventurers. Switzerland manufactures, also, to no inconsiderable extent, for foreign markets. Yet with all these outlets and employments for her youth, Switzerland furnishes regiments to Naples, Rome, and other Italian States, and keeps, in reality, a very large standing army, in proportion to her population, always on foot, but always in foreign pay. . . . This social state — a state, namely, in which temporary employment is more suitable than life-long application to one pursuit; this social element — the youth of a country *living in present idleness, yet in certainty of future subsistence*, has, in every age and nation, and even in every family, impeded industry and application to the useful and peaceful arts, and engendered a spirit of temporary exertion, and a wild craving for excitement which warfare only can gratify. . . . This prodigious development of an element of warfare in the new social state of Europe, may well make the observer of our times pause before he admits that universal and perpetual peace is a necessary result of a universal diffusion of landed property."

It is, moreover, a mistake to suppose that even the peasant proprietors themselves — the actual holders and cultivators of the soil — are *necessarily*, by interest and position, hostile to war. Not only do they often share the notion that war is a provision for their younger brothers and young sons — and we know how, even in this country, many a sturdy and reluctant taxpayer is a vehement opponent of any abolition of sinecures, or reduction in the army or the navy, if he has a son to be provided for, or a brother to be promoted — but the idea that *war may be waged at the enemy's cost*, as in the early days of Napoleon, is firmly rooted in the minds of a large portion of the community, and is fostered by men from whom better thoughts might be expected. Even M. Michelet, who ought to be ashamed to pander to the elfish and malignant passions of his countrymen, did not scruple to write thus, two years before the revolution of 1848: — “I never saw, in any history, a thirty-years’ peace. The bankers, who have never foreseen any revolution, reply that there will be no stir in Europe. The first reason they give is, that peace is profitable to the world. To the world! Yes: *and not little so to us*. Others are running, we are walking: we shall soon be the hindmost. Secondly, they say, War can only begin with a loan, and we will not grant it.’ But what if it begun with a treasure such as Russia is accumulating? What *if the war be made to support the war*, as in the time of Napoleon?” Here M. Michelet, a Frenchman, a philosopher, an advocate of peasant properties, stimulating his countrymen’s passion for war, suggesting it as a means of promoting the prosperity of France, and intimating that it can be carried on at the expense of her neighbours.

Our survey of this great question, then, has shown much ground for believing that the prevalent opinion as to the social, political, and economic consequences of the

subdivision of land, is partial, incomplete, and therefore, of necessity, erroneous ; that the law of equal inheritance is by no means as favourable to peace, to freedom, to political tranquillity, or to the *general* prosperity of the community, as it is commonly represented to be ; that these happy results can only ensue when the possessors of land shall have become the sole class of the community, having absorbed or superseded every other class ; that, in fine, a nation *consisting* of small proprietors may ultimately be peaceful, prosperous, conservative, and free, but scarcely a nation merely *comprising* such a class, especially if that class be preponderating, and artificially fostered and increased ; and that the system of peasant proprietorship therefore, if persisted in, must lead to, and if successful must involve, a population stationary in numbers, and, as we shall shortly perceive, stationary in civilisation also.

But we shall not be in a position to pronounce a definite judgment on this mighty question, till we have considered what would be the effect produced on the general tone and character of society by the subdivision of land, when the system had attained its full development and worked out its final issue—what would be its operation on *civilisation*, using the word in its widest signification, that is to say, on the progress of humanity in the elaboration of its highest capacities, and the achievement of its noblest destinies.*

* The following is Guizot's admirable analysis of the idea comprised under the word "civilisation :"—

"Pour commencer cette recherche, je vais essayer de mettre sous vos yeux quelques hypothèses ; je décrirai un certain nombre d'états de société, et puis nous nous demanderons si l'instinct général y reconnoît l'état d'un peuple qui se civilise, si c'est là le sens que le genre humain attache naturellement au mot 'civilisation.'

"Voici un peuple dont la vie extérieure est douce, commode ; il paie peu d'impôts, il ne souffre point ; la justice lui est rendue dans les relations privées ; en un mot, l'existence matérielle, dans son

Now, in order to see our way clearly towards a reply to these inquiries, we must assume the law of equal inheritance to have completed its work; we must ima-

ensemble, est assez bien et heureusement réglée. Mais en même temps l'existence intellectuelle et morale de ce peuple est tenue avec grand soin dans un état d'engourdissement, d'inertie, je ne veux pas dire d'oppression, parce qu'il n'en a pas le sentiment, mais de compression. Ceci n'est pas sans exemple. Il y a en un grand nombre de petites républiques aristocratiques où les sujets ont été ainsi traité comme des troupeaux, bien tenus et matériellement heureux, mais sans activité intellectuelle et morale. Est-ce là la civilisation? est-ce là un peuple qui se civilise?

“Voici une autre hypothèse: c'est une peuple dont l'existence matérielle est moins douce, moins commode, supportable cependant. En revanche, on n'a point négligé les besoins moraux, intellectuels; on leur distribue une certaine pâture; on cultive dans ce peuple des sentimens élevés, purs; ses croyances religieuses, morales, ont atteint un certain degré de développement; mais on a grand soin d'étouffer en lui le principe de la liberté; on donne satisfaction aux besoins intellectuels et moraux, comme ailleurs aux besoins matériels; on mesure à chacun sa part de vérité; on ne permet à personne de la chercher à lui tout seul. L'immobilité est le caractère de la vie morale; c'est l'état où sont tombées la plupart des populations de l'Asie, où les dominations théocratiques retiennent l'humanité; c'est l'état des Indous, par exemple. Je fais la même question que sur le peuple précédent: est-ce là un peuple qui se civilise?

“Je prends une troisième et dernière hypothèse. La liberté de chaque individu est très grande; l'inégalité entre eux est rare, ou au moins passagère. Chacun fait à peu près ce qu'il veut, et ne diffère pas beaucoup en puissance de son voisin; mais il y a très peu d'intérêts généraux, très peu d'idées publiques, très peu de société, en un mot; les facultés et l'existence des individus se déploient et s'écoulent isolément sans agir les uns sur les autres, sans laisser de traces; les générations successives laissent la société au même point où elles l'ont recue; c'est l'état des tribus sauvages; la liberté et l'égalité sont là; et pourtant, à coup sûr, la civilisation n'y est point.

“Je pourrais multiplier ces hypothèses; mais je crois que nous en avons assez pour démêler quel est le sens populaire et naturel du mot civilisation.

“Il est clair qu'aucun des états que je viens de parcourir ne correspond, selon le bon sens naturel des hommes, à ce terme. Pourquoi? Il me semble que le premier fait qui soit compris dans le mot *civili-*

gine the perilous and painful process by which the class of peasant proprietors is to starve out and absorb into itself every other class to have been undergone and overpast ; we must suppose the population to have become almost, or altogether, stationary, and the whole commu-

sation, c'est le fait de progrès, de développement ; il réveille aussitôt l'idée d'un peuple qui marche, non pour changer de place, mais pour changer d'état ; d'un peuple dont la condition s'étend et s'améliore. L'idée du progrès, du développement, me paraît être l'idée fondamentale contenue sous le mot de civilisation.

“ Est-ce là tout, Messieurs ? Avons nous épuisé le sens naturel, usuel, du mot *civilisation* ? Le fait ne contient-il rien de plus ?

“ C'est à peu près comme si nous demandions : L'espèce humaine n'est elle, au fond, qu'une fourmillière, une société où il ne s'agit que d'ordre et de bien-être, où plus la somme du travail sera grande et la répartition des fruits de travail équitable, plus le but sera atteint et le progrès accompli ?

“ L'instinct des hommes répugne à une définition si étroite de la destinée humaine. Il lui semble, au premier aspect, que le mot civilisation comprend quelque chose de plus étendu, de plus complexe, de supérieur à la pure perfection des relations sociales, de la force et du bien-être social. Il demande le développement de la vie individuelle, de la vie intérieure, le développement de l'homme lui-même, de ses facultés, de ses sentimens, de ses idées. Il demande un état où, Si la société y est plus imparfaite qu'ailleurs, l'humanité y apparaît avec plus de grandeur et de puissance. Il reste beaucoup de conquêtes sociales à faire ; mais d'immenses conquêtes intellectuelles et morales sont accomplies ; beaucoup de biens et de droits manquent à beaucoup d'hommes ; mais beaucoup de grands hommes vivent et brillent aux yeux du monde. Les lettres, les sciences, les arts déploient tout leur éclat. Partout où le genre humain voit resplendir ces grands images, ces images glorifiées de la nature humaine, partout où il voit créer ce trésor de jouissances sublimes, il reconnoît et nomme la civilisation.

“ Deux faits sont donc compris dans ce grand fait ; il subsiste à deux conditions, et se révèle à deux symptômes ; le développement de l'activité sociale et celui de l'activité individuelle, le progrès de la société et le progrès de l'humanité. Partout où la condition extérieure de l'homme se vivifie, s'améliore, partout où la nature intime de l'homme se montre avec éclat, avec grandeur, à ces deux signes, et souvent malgré la profonde imperfection de l'état social, le genre humain applaudit et proclame la civilisation.”

nity to be one uniform body of small, but comfortable and *well-to-do* land-owners. How or at what cost this transition state can be got through, we confess we do not clearly see; the problem may prove practically insoluble; but we will suppose the difficulty successfully surmounted, and the social condition so much desired to be finally achieved; and we have now to ask ourselves how it will operate on the deeper interests and higher prospects of our race?

It is not to be denied that a state of universal competence, in which there shall be no inordinate wealth and no sordid indigence; from which extravagance and pauperism shall be alike excluded; where a redundant population and excessive competition shall no longer condemn the child to premature, nor the man to overwhelming, labour; where industry and temperance shall be sure of their reward; where every man shall be happy,

“——whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air
In his own ground;”

where every man shall “sit under his own vine and his own fig-tree, none daring to make him afraid;”—it is not to be denied that a state such as this is, even in prospect, full of fascination for those who, like ourselves, have been long saddened and perplexed by the multitudinous anomalies, the startling extremes, the sore moral maladies, the grievous physical sufferings, which disfigure the actual society around us. We regard with a sense of unspeakable relief the picture of a social state from which are banished nearly all the evils which have so long baffled and amazed us here — which have driven the philanthropist to despair, the wretched to rebel, and the religious man to seek refuge in another life against

the sorrows and sufferings which seem incurable in this. The mere idea that such a comparative Paradise is attainable, disposes us to listen with impatient indignation to the doubter who throws cold water on our enthusiasm, by calling upon us to pause and inquire whether this apparent Eden may not have some counterbalancing disadvantages which, in our zeal, we have overlooked, and whether it may not have to be purchased at a price which it would be shallow wisdom and sorry economy to pay. Even gold, it is said, may be bought too dear.

There is, no doubt, much, very much, to admire in the social condition of the Swiss and the Norwegian, and much, very much, to deplore in our own. It is sad to see the intensity of pursuit which with us, in every line, seems essential to success ; it is sad to see so many thousands, whose whole existence, from the cradle to the grave, is one breathless hurry — a race, a struggle, and a strife ; it is lamentable to see one class who live only to toil, side by side with another who live only to squander ; and we are tempted to think how far more enviable is that nation where every one has something, and nobody has much.

“ Tutus caret obsoleti
Sordibus tecti ;
Caret invidendâ
Sobrius aulâ.”

But a state of material comfort, though embellished by content and free from the grinding anxieties which too commonly beset a struggling existence, is not the highest position, nor the sole good, for humanity to aim at. A society composed of one uniform class, enjoying a universally diffused competence, will be stationary, not progressive, in its character. Now, progress is the very essence of civilisation. Contentment is a blessed

thing; but the content which arises from having achieved much, and the content which consists in being satisfied with little, have very different influences on national as on individual development. There is a content which rests in a lazy and unambitious mediocrity, which buries its talent in the earth, acquiesces in a stagnant vegetation, and aspires after no higher existence; and there is a content which flows out of a just estimate of the objects of exertion and the ends of life, the result of having aspired after attainable and worthy aims, not of having been devoid of aspirations altogether. The one is the last and noblest victory of the ripened mind; the other is the most fatal enemy to the amelioration and maturity of the race. There are two sources which foster in the bosom of a nation the elements of the higher civilisation; the stimulus of necessity, and the stimulus of leisure. *In a community of peasant proprietors both these will be absent.* Men who are secure of finding in the quiet culture of the soil a maintenance adequate to their few requirements, and who see no prospect and no motive for rising above the level mediocrity of their neighbours, are wholly without that spur to strenuous exertion which works such miracles in less monotonous and less comfortable communities, which so often makes the poor man fight his way to wealth, and the industrious man to leisure, and the uneducated man to the loftiest heights of poetry and science. An assured competence, however small, is, of all the foes to energy and success, the most fatal, and the most paralysing. Accordingly, we find that sameness and stationariness characterise nations among whom peasant proprietors predominate and give the tone.

“This state of society,” says Mr. Laing, “is necessarily stationary at a certain attainment of well-being. It is not, and cannot be, progressive. It admits of no advance in the means and ways of living, acting, or thinking, beyond a certain fixed

hereditary standard ; and one generation cannot afford to acquire or to gratify any higher tastes or wants than those of the generation which preceded it. In the countries or districts in which this social state has been established for ages, as in Switzerland, the Tyrol, Norway, Flanders, the man of the nineteenth century is the man of the fourteenth. His way of living, his way of thinking, his diet, dwelling, dress, his tastes, wants, and enjoyments, his ideas, his civilisation, are stereotyped. . . . The having enough for the most simple wants and tastes of a working agricultural life, the contentedness of a whole population with this enough, and the legal impediment, from the equal division of property among the children, to any class in the community attaining permanently more than this enough, may be a very happy social state, and altogether in accordance with the spirit and precepts of ancient philosophers ; but it is a philosophy of barbarism, not of civilisation — a social state of routine and stagnation, not of activity and progress. . . . Hereditary wealth is too rare for the individuals possessing it to form a class in society. . . . The want of such a class with more than the bare means of living, and with the leisure to apply to higher material or intellectual objects than the supplying of their household wants by their own household work, is not favourable to the progress of society. The material objects and interests must predominate over those intellectual and moral ones which dignify man as motives to action, but which must remain almost dormant in society if there be no class free from the cares of daily subsistence, and with the education and leisure which only an opulent class can command, to cultivate and act on them. Education of an ordinary kind may be widely diffused in this social state, reading, writing, and useful acquirements may be imparted to all the population, and yet education may be very defective and uninfluential, and may lose in depth what it gains in breadth. Few in this social state are in a condition to enter into those higher studies and sciences which not only elevate the individual to a high pitch of mind, but give society itself the language, ideas, and spirit of a higher intellectual condition.”

In fact, without necessity to stimulate talent in the mass, and without an opulent and leisure class to culti-

vate and to reward scientific and literary eminence, the very elements and conditions of the nobler civilisation will be wanting. Intellectual cultivation will be monotonous and mediocre, even if it do not become wholly utilitarian: the abstract, the profound, and the poetic, will be in imminent danger of being starved out of existence by want of the encouragement on which alone they can thrive. Moreover, a society of equals, with no hierarchy of gradations to cement them into one mass, will be a mere aggregation of independent units, isolated and self-contained, with no mental collision, and little varied interchange of thought. All being occupied in the same pursuits, and living in the same intellectual and moral atmosphere, there can be little of that diversity of view and opposition of ideas by which truth is elicited and intelligence aroused. It is not out of a nation of peasant proprietors, though it may occasionally be out of their *class*, that poets, artists, philosophers, or astronomers can come forth. Where, among such, could Shakspeare or Dante, Phidias or Canova, Plato or Bacon, Copernicus, Galileo, or La Place, find the appreciation upon which they live, the reward to which they aspire, or the sustenance and stimulus without which they could not struggle into being? No! Material well-being, the absence of want, a diffused uniformity of comfort, are valuable attainments, and amply worth much effort to compass; but there is something beyond and above all these—something for which a portion of these may wisely be emperilled and sacrificed; that perpetual progress, namely, that ceaseless aspiration, that illimitable striving after loftier and still loftier heights in knowledge, in wisdom, in conception, in achievement, which constitute at once the nobility of the individual, the glory of the nation, the hope and the grandeur of the race.

Even the favourable picture which we have adopted

from the advocates of peasant proprietorship of the state of material comfort, steady industry, and security of social position which it engenders, has its reverse side. Security has its injurious as well as its serviceable action on the character and habits; and men who do not strive to rise will not always be able to prevent themselves from falling. There is much truth in the following remarks, though we are not prepared to adopt them without allowance. "The security afforded by the possession of a patch of land is often worse than insecurity. Granting that its owner is aware that, in ordinary seasons, its produce will suffice to support himself and his family, he cannot fail to be at the same time impressed with the conviction that his destiny is fixed and irrevocable; that he has no means of advancing himself; and that he and his successors must continue to pass their days in the same unnoticed obscurity and poverty. And it is scarcely possible that he should have this conviction without being listless, and the slave of routine practices. The happiness of peasant proprietors seems very much akin to that of oysters: they are ignorant and satisfied. . . . Their security is not a source of activity and wealth, but of indolence and poverty, and goes far to extinguish that desire to excel and to rise to a higher station which is the origin of all improvement, and of whatever is refined and exalted. 'The small proprietors and farmers of France (says Dr. Birkbeck) having no means of improving their condition, submit to necessity, and pass their lives contentedly.' It is customary at this moment, in several of the southern departments of that kingdom, as it was 3000 years ago, to thresh corn by treading it out by horses and oxen."* The fact is, we fear, that, from the law of our imperfect nature, content and progress can rarely go together, nor competence and laborious ambition. The fate of

* McCulloch, "Treatise on Succession," p. 90.

the yeomen class in England—especially of those “statesmen,” as they are termed, who still linger in Cumberland and Westmoreland—is a confirmatory comment on this text. Their fifty or sixty acres of hereditary land, though amply sufficient to maintain them in homely abundance, is not enough fully to employ their time, or arouse their dormant energies. In a deplorable proportion of cases they become dawdling and inactive, suffer dreadfully from the *tedium vitæ*, take to drinking, get into difficulties, and are ultimately compelled to sell their patrimonial estate to some wealthier and more energetic neighbour. The class is fast dying out.

To set against these considerations, we must observe that there is one kind of intelligence which will usually be more highly developed in a community of small proprietors than in one where civilisation is more systematic, and where division of labour has been carried to perfection; that kind of intelligence, we mean, which consists in fertility of resource, and a wide range of *adaptability* of the faculties possessed. The result of the system of division of labour, when carried to that height at which it produces the most astonishing miracles of industry and art, is to *confine* the faculties of the individual, as the price paid for their perfect development in one direction. The continental peasants—and the same is true to some extent of their artisans also—can do a little in many lines, but can do nothing in a first-rate style. Hence they are very inferior to the English labourers as ploughmen, as blacksmiths, as carpenters, but they make better colonists. They are more *miscellaneously* clever, and can make themselves more “generally useful.” Mr. Laing observes, with much justice,

“The exercise of the faculties by the application of the mind to a variety of operations, the invention, the ingenuity, and judgment called forth, the resources to be found for want of

skill, tools, and co-operative aid, make the production of an article by single-handed or by family work much more intellectual and improving, although the article produced be very much inferior and more costly than if it had been produced by factory-work. The product in the latter case is better, but not the producer. His mind is less exerted, his faculties less exercised, by his day's work, than the man's who has to apply himself every day to various occupations; who perhaps has to make a nail, forge a horse-shoe, nail it on, yoke his cart, mend it, drive it to market, and sell a load of corn of his own sowing, reaping, and threshing. The individual doing one single operation all his life, in the subdivision of work to which he belongs, will scarcely be a man of such mental powers—*at least his work will not make him so*—as this individual of multifarious occupations. The working peasant proprietor in Switzerland, who sits down in winter, after his crops are reaped, to make a clock or a gun, will not certainly produce a time-piece like Dent's, or a fowling-piece like Smith's; but his faculties and thinking powers are more exercised by his work than those of any one operative employed by Mr. Dent or Mr. Smith in making the one separate part of their more perfect machines which he is bred to make. . . . As far as a man's daily occupations influence his mental condition, factory-work tends to lower, not to raise, his intellectual powers."

This is very true: confinement to one fractional division of industry has an unquestionable tendency to cramp and dwarf a man's intelligence; and the counteraction must be sought in that general mental cultivation for which the superior productiveness of assorted and combined labour ought to purchase leisure and means.

We have now gone fully into the consideration of this momentous and deeply interesting social problem; and we will sum up the results in a few brief sentences. We believe that the compulsory (or universally customary) partition of land would, in the end, lead to a state of society which neither the philosopher nor the statesman could regard with complacency; a state which

appears attractive only where its *first* operation is exclusively seen, and its ultimate consequences are kept out of view; a state which, after the effects of its incipient and incomplete application have been reaped, must be hostile in its further progress to peace, to freedom, to political tranquillity and permanence; a state which, when entirely reached (if this be ever possible), would be fatal alike to the multiplication and the progress of mankind. At the same time, it is monstrous that industrious men should be unable to obtain land, and to rise into the position of proprietors: not only should all obstacles in their way be removed, but every encouragement should be given them to attempt and to succeed. The subdivision of land should be left wholly free—should be neither impeded nor enforced by legislation. Entails should be abolished; the law, which in England confers the real property of an intestate upon the eldest son or the nearest male heir, and that which in France compels the division equally among the children, should be both abrogated. Legislative restrictions once removed, variety of individual opinion would then operate to produce a varied social state; there would be large estates, and wealthy proprietors, and a leisure class, to supply the conservative element and encourage the higher civilisation; and there would be peasant properties to form the stepping-stone and the reward for those among the labourers who had the desire and the capacity to rise. There would be an educated class to cultivate the nobler fields of intellect and science; there would be an aristocracy to stand between the people and the throne; there would be a peasantry contented even when striving and ambitious, because conscious of no injustice, and irritated by no insuperable obstacles; and there would be a yeomanry to complete and consolidate the social hierarchy.

We have hitherto confined our attention to the sub-

division of landed property, and its operation on the economical, social, and political condition of the European nations among which it prevails. We now proceed to investigate the second of those peculiar features which distinguish the social structure of continental countries from that of Great Britain, and which we have called *bureaucracy*: Mr. Laing calls it *functionarism*, which is, perhaps, a better name. This is a difference which, even more than that connected with the partition of the soil, pervades the daily and domestic life of the nation, and modifies its whole aspect as presented to the eye of the passing stranger. In England, the civil servants of the government are few, unconnected, and unobtrusive; on the Continent, they are innumerable, omnipresent, and constitute a separate, organised, and powerful class. In England they confine themselves to absolutely necessary functions; on the Continent they interfere in every transaction and event of life. In England, as a general rule, a man is only reminded of their existence by the annual visit of the tax-gatherer, unless, indeed, he has to appeal to the law, or has rendered himself amenable to it; on the Continent, scarcely a day passes, scarcely an operation can be concluded, without coming into contact or collision with one or other of their number. Many of the duties performed by officials on the Continent are here performed by elected parish or municipal functionaries, many are left to individual discretion, many more are not performed at all. With us, a man's free-will is limited only by his neighbour's free-will, or his neighbour's rights; in France and Austria, it can be exercised only subject to government permission previously obtained. Restriction is the exception here, it is the rule there. Throughout the Continent, a citizen cannot engage in business, build a house, or take a journey,

without leave ; and leave is only obtained through an established routine of tedious and annoying formalities.

“In France, Switzerland, Belgium, and the constitutional states of Germany,” says Mr. Laing, “people call themselves free, because they enjoy more or less of the forms of representative government, and have more or less political liberty ; but they have no more civil liberty, and no more sense or feeling of it, than when they had no constitutions at all. They live, act, and have their being under a system of interference in every man’s movements and doings, precisely as in Austria, Prussia, and states without any constitutions or political liberty. . . . The reality of civil liberty in the free use of time, industry, and capital, and in the free action of the individual, is unknown to the continental man. It is amusing to hear a German or a Frenchman discussing constitutional forms of government, universal suffrage, the qualifications of representatives, the equal rights of citizens ; and, when he has settled all these points to his satisfaction, in a theory which proves very clearly that we enjoy no real liberty in England, and do not understand its first principles, to ask him to take a jaunt with you to Tours or Marseilles, Cologne or Leipsic. ‘Oh,’ says he, ‘I must run to the bureau for our passports. I must get them signed by the proper authorities, countersigned by other proper authorities, *viséé* by the proper authorities in every town we stop at on our journey, in order to prevent trouble with the police ; and I must get this done before the bureaux are shut for the day, or we shall have to wait till to-morrow.’ To be free and independent in the sense that the common man in England is free and independent, seems not to be a want in the mind of the continental man, even of fortune and education. The English traveller in France or Germany, who has gone himself to the Hotel de Ville or the passport office, to have his passport *viséé* and signed, instead of leaving it to his *valet de place*, and who has seen the crowd of tradesmen, country dealers, travelling artisans, and peasants from the neighbouring villages, who have been at the fair, standing for hours to have their papers examined and signed, will return with a pretty distinct idea of the difference between political and civil freedom, between the mind

spirit, character, and social state of the English, and of the continental people."

In order to make the operation of this system of bureaucratic supervision and interference intelligible to those among our readers who have never *resided* on the Continent, we will mention a few facts with regard to Austria, derived from personal knowledge. Under the old *régime*, if a man wished to build a house, he must first apply to the chief officer of the district, who required him to furnish exact plans of the intended edifice. All his neighbours were then called upon to say whether the proposed building, or any portion of it, would trench upon their rights, comfort, or convenience. If it would, the applicant was obliged to meet and neutralise their objections. The municipality were then summoned to examine whether *they* saw any objection to the erection. The plans were then submitted to the official engineer of the district, who was desired to report especially on the points of the solidity of the construction and the danger from fire. After all these preliminaries were satisfactorily gone through (during which time the entire building season sometimes slipped away, though there was seldom any needless or vexatious delay), the man was at liberty to proceed to action. But he was compelled to adhere strictly to his plan. If, either during the progress of the erection, or at any subsequent period, he wished to alter the construction of a fireplace, or the position of a chimney, the same formalities had to be repeated, and leave again asked and obtained. If he wished to establish a manufactory, the same process had to be gone through; and his business was carried on subject to the constant supervision of the customs or excise officers. In the case of a silk or cotton factory, all goods sent off in any direction were *leaded*, and travelled with a certificate. It may well be conceived how vexatious and

onerous all this would be, besides being a direct expense. In one establishment, this operation alone cost the proprietors 150*l.* a-year of direct outlay, paid to the government officials, for stamps, *leading*, &c.; very little of which found its way into the coffers of the state. Besides this, there is a constant inventory and taking of stock by the officials, which requires considerable labour and book-keeping on the part of the establishment, to make every such entry as is required. There are various other matters in which individual action is either interfered with or supervised. If you wish to add a kitchen, a bed-room, or a cow-shed to your house, you must again give notice and lodge plans. Your house is visited every six weeks to ascertain if there be any new risk from fire. The baptism and inoculation of your children is watched over and insisted on. If you keep dogs, you must send them once a year to be examined, to see if they are in a healthy and safe condition. In short, everything proceeds upon the assumption that individuals are not to be trusted with the regulation of their own proceedings, or the superintendence of their own safety, but that they are, in fact, minors and wards of the state. It might be imagined that all this would have been swept away, or at least greatly modified, by the revolution. But it is not so. Although the political condition of the empire has been changed to its foundations, and the courts of justice remodelled, all these details, and their old mode of action, remain; and the Germans may well despair of seeing them changed in our days.

There is no doubt that much of this system is now kept up for the benefit of the officials, rather than of the public, as we hinted in a former Paper; and the difficulty of changing it will be proportionally great. A glance at the relative numbers of the public functionaries in England and on the Continent, will give us

an idea of the extent of the difference. In Prussia we have no means of ascertaining the truth. In Austria, with a population of thirty-six millions, they are stated at 120,000. In France, also, with a population of thirty-six millions, they are variously given by different authorities, according as these take in only the regular and permanent paid officials, or add to these the unpaid, the occasionally paid, and the retired; but the lowest estimate exceeds 350,000. We believe the following will be nearly an exact list of the actual *employés* under each department, who are paid in some shape or other, leaving out the pensioners and the municipal authorities. It is taken from a recent report to the Legislative Assembly:—

Ministry of the Interior	-	-	-	-	344,000
„ Justice	-	-	-	-	11,100
„ Worship and Instruction	-	-	-	-	50,000
„ Public Works, Commerce, and Agriculture	-	-	-	-	10,000
„ Foreign Affairs	-	-	-	-	632
„ War and Marine	-	-	-	-	43,633
„ Finance, Customs, and Excise	-	-	-	-	76,000
					535,365

Compare this enormous army of paid officials with the modest government provision in Great Britain, which has a population of thirty millions. In 1835, the whole civil service of the state was conducted by 23,578 persons; and since that period, we believe, the number has rather diminished than increased.

But this is not the only difference, nor perhaps the most important. In this country, the civil officers of government form no distinct class: they are merely individual members of the higher or of the middle orders. They are no more a separate and organised body than are merchants, manufacturers, or authors.

But on the Continent, the public functionaries are a trained, disciplined, and compact band, as completely an army as the naval or military force—as regular a hierarchy, as distinguishable a class, as the clergy. They form, as Laing expresses it, the third element in the social system. They are subjected to a strict and established discipline, and are united by a strong *esprit de corps*. They stand apart from their fellow-citizens, and may generally be distinguished by their manners and their dress.

“We should be rather surprised,” observes Mr. Laing, “to hear our own *beamptenstand*—our collectors, controllers, assessors, tide-waiters, gaugers—considered as a high and influential class in our social body, or considered as a class at all, in any way distinct from the respectable middle class in which they are merged. In Germany it is different. . . . There the functionaries are under a semi-military discipline. In Bavaria, for example, the superior civil officer can place his inferior officer under arrest for neglect of duty or other offence against civil functionary discipline. In Wurtemberg the functionary cannot marry without leave from his superior. Voltaire somewhere says, that the art of government is to make two-thirds of a nation pay all they possibly can for the benefit of the other third. This is realised in Germany by the functionary system. The functionaries are not there for the benefit of the people, but the people for the benefit of the functionaries. All this machinery of functionarism, with its numerous ranks and gradations in every district, filled with a staff of clerks and expectants in every department looking for employment, appointments, or promotions, was intended to be a new support to the throne in the new social state of the Continent—a third class, in close connection with the people by their various official duties of interference in all public and private affairs, yet attached by their interests to the kingly power.”

Mr. Laing conceives the bureaucratic system to have been a recent and artificial creation of the continental sovereigns to meet the hiatus produced in social life by the absorption or extinction of the feudal aris-

tocracy. But this is far from being the case. Though much extended of late, it is a product and a relic of the old despotic and paternal governments, when it was thought right, possible, and necessary for the central authority to direct and control the daily life and habitual actions of its subjects. Bureaucracy is less the antagonism of the aristocratic than of the municipal and self-governing element in society. It is no new principle.

The different ideas which lie at the root of the two systems may be thus stated: A certain amount of wisdom is required for the conduct of affairs, and the management of associated life. This requisite wisdom is supposed by functionarism to reside in the rulers, and by municipality to reside in the people. In England and America we assume that every man understands his own interest and can direct his own business better than any government can do it for him. In France and Germany they assume that the people are unknowing and incompetent, and will mismanage both their own private affairs and all associated business unless supervised and directed by the superior knowledge and experience of a trained and educated class of rulers. The fundamental notion on which the superstructure of continental bureaucracy is built, is—not only that the government is wiser than its subjects, but—that the wisdom of its subjects is inadequate to the ordinary cases of individual or social action.

Now, it is evident that this assumption has an alarming tendency to realise and justify itself. The incapacity which is presumed will sooner or later be created. A people that is always regarded as in a state of pupilage, and kept in leading-strings, can never emerge into mature manhood. It is undoubtedly true that trained functionaries may often be able to manage each individual department better than municipal or parochial

amateurs could do. It is probable that they may give useful advice, and that they will often avoid those multitudinous failures, those abortive experiments, and those monstrous and costly blunders, through which a self-governing people struggle onward to sensible and wise results at last; but, in the first place, that invaluable national education which is carried on during the progress of these efforts, and the elimination of these errors, is entirely lost under the bureaucratic system; and, in the second place, the plans adopted not being wrought out by the people, but being forced upon them from without, will seldom either be well adapted to their wants or have so strong a hold on their affections. The incapacity for self-government which bureaucracy has engendered among the continental nations was strongly shown in 1848. They threw off their sovereigns, they proclaimed republics, or substituted other dynasties; but they had no ability to organise new institutions, they could not emancipate themselves from the old army of civil functionaries, *because they were unable to dispense with them*; and thus, one by one, they gradually fell back under the old *régime*. Whereas in California, peopled by a sudden influx of emigrants, wild in their tempers, lawless in their habits, greedy for gold, thirsty for sudden opulence, without chiefs, without guidance, without control, the innate and ineffaceable genius of a race of men long accustomed to govern and to guide themselves has enabled them, with an almost miraculous rapidity, to educe order out of the chaos, and to establish something like a civilised and legal community, without the smallest assistance or interference on the part of the central authority. In England, were our complicated government of king, lords, and commons, swept away to-morrow, we could soon re-organise the ruling hierarchy, perhaps on a better footing than before; because every town, and almost every village, could afford us most of

the materials, and much of the experience, required. But in 1848 and 1849 all the collective wisdom of the bureaucratic countries of Germany and France, with a clear field before them, were able to strike out little that was sensible, and nothing that was new.

We have said that a government will generally manage each particular in national affairs better than the people, more judiciously, at less expense, and with fewer blunders and false steps. But this is by no means universally the case. There is much truth in the following remarks of Mr. Laing.

“In France, Germany, and all over the Continent, whatever may be the form of government, the spirit of self-government is equally dormant among the people. It is the state that does everything; whether in form this state power be constitutional or autocratic. The state alone plans and executes all works of general or local interest, by its own functionaries, and independently of the judgment of those locally interested. Roads, canals, bridges, quays, and public buildings, are consequently constructed, not in a commensurate and due proportion in extent and expense to the want to be provided for, but upon a disproportionate scale, and with an excess of magnificence and expenditure ridiculously in contrast with the importance of the object and the actual or possible wants of the community or locality. . . . This disproportion between cost and the advantage to the public is the great characteristic of public works in all states in which the people have no control or voice in the management of their own affairs. It is the architectural style of despotism.”

A comparison of British and continental road-making brings to light another weak point of the bureaucratic as contrasted with the municipal system. England is covered with good roads in its most remote as in its most populous and central districts. France has a few magnificent highways branching out from her metropolis; but the cross roads in the less frequented districts are scanty and infamously impassable.

"It is curious," says Mr. Laing, "to see what, in a century and a half, has been the difference of the results in the two countries—the difference between the centralisation of the funds, management, and execution of all roads, bridges, and public works in the hands of a state department, employing officials of the highest skill and scientific attainments,—men regularly bred for the duties of this department,—and the non-centralisation of this great and all-important national business, the leaving it to the public to plan, execute, and manage for themselves, through their own trustees and undertakers, and under their own control, what in each county or locality was considered useful or necessary, without superintendence or interference by any government functionary. The question of centralisation or non-centralisation is here brought to the test of experience."

In 1828, it was officially reported to the government, that the highways in France extended to 25,752 miles; of which one half were in a state of good repair, and one half in a state of dilapidation; and that to complete and repair the main lines of communication, or royal roads, as they are termed, the sum of eight millions sterling would be required. In England, within an area of 58,335 square miles, we had (according to a parliamentary paper of 1848) 22,382 miles of good turnpike roads, besides parish roads not turnpike; while France, with an area of 148,840 square miles, had only 10,716 miles of roads reported as good. "Under the English system of non-centralisation, and non-interference, one square mile in England contains on an average a greater number of good roads than any ten in France or Germany, and with more traffic on them."

The history of railroads affords the most favourable view of the foreign as contrasted with the English mode of procedure. In this country, the waste, extravagance, and want of consideration displayed in these constructions has been monstrous and disgraceful. Vast sums of money have been lavished in parliamentary contest and litigation; lines have been made at twice the necessary

cost; they have been made where none were needed; and two have been made where one would have sufficed. Altogether, it is probable that the same actual accommodation to the public might, under a wise system, have been attained at half the cost. In France, though the government has not made the railways, it has *leased* to different companies, after the most elaborate and tedious investigations, the right of making them, and working them for a term of years, after which they are to become national property; and will then be a most prolific source of revenue. In Belgium and Germany they are, we believe, state undertakings, and have been constructed at about *one third* their cost in England. In Russia, when railways became the order of the day, the Czar acted with a degree of sound sense which freer governments would do well to imitate. He sent a commission of experienced engineers to visit France, Belgium, England, and America, to examine the railway systems of these respective countries, and report which of them was best suited for adoption in Russia. They have reported in favour of the cheap and rough system of the United States. So far we are fain to admit that the superiority of sense and wisdom has lain on the side of the continental nations. But the result of the whole is, that the railway communication of England has been commenced and perfected within twenty years, while that of the Continent is still partial, scanty, incomplete, and fragmentary; and while in America—the most municipal and uncentralised of countries—it is as complete as in England, and has been as cheaply managed as in Belgium and Bavaria.

Another consequence of the bureaucratic system is thus referred to by Mr. Laing:—

“The direct effects of functionarism have undoubtedly reduced the people of Germany to a state of pupilage; they are not accustomed to act for themselves. The *indirect* effects have

deteriorated the character, and retarded the industry and prosperity, of the German people as much as its direct working on the social body. The numbers of small functionaries provided for at the public expense, in the departments of the law, the finance, the Church, the educational affairs, the police, the passport establishment, and all the other branches of public business springing from the principle of the state's interference in all social and individual action, *keep almost the whole youth of the country in a state of dependence upon favour for the appointment in some public office*, instead of depending upon industry and exertion in the useful arts. Every second or third young man in the middle class is an expectant of office. . . . He is sent to study at a university, in order to be qualified for office. After the *bread-studies*, as they are called in Germany, are gone through, the young man hangs on, often for many years, an idle expectant for office, and may possibly [this possibility, it is fair to state, is *in time* a certainty] get employment at last in a government bureau, at a salary which can only help to maintain him along with the little allowance which his father can afford him. A great proportion of the small capitals gathered by tradesmen, shopkeepers, farmers, functionaries, and clergymen, and others in the middle station of life, is thus expended without being utilised. The same small capitals with us would be applied in extending the business in which they were acquired, or in placing the sons in some similar business. In Germany they are applied to supporting the sons at a university, half students, half vagrants, for many idle years; and then supporting them in some inferior office in a state department, until, by seniority, favour, or merit, a higher step is attained, with a salary on which the functionary can subsist. The prospect of office in the vast functionary system turns away the industry and capital that might be employed with more advantage to the country and the individual in the humble paths of trade or reproductive labour."

The effect of functionarism on education is especially deserving the study of those who, in this country, advocate the assumption by the state of the instruction of the nation. We are not blind to the benefits which would result from such a system of general education

as might be established in England if the views of this party were to prevail; but no one who has watched the operation of the principle in Germany can be blind to its mischiefs and its dangers too. At present, the education of our people is, no doubt, deplorably defective, though yearly becoming less so; but, at least, it is varied, expansive, and improvable. Any one who has a peculiar view, a new theory, a bright idea, a promising amelioration to suggest, can put it in practice, and work it out at once, without asking anybody's leave. If it succeeds, it is adopted with or without modifications by other schools and teachers; if it fails, it is an error more exploded and disposed of. Systems the most opposite, but each, perhaps, adapted to particular characters, aptitudes, or objects, are in simultaneous operation side by side, and their results can be contrasted and compared. But in Germany the schools are all conducted by teachers, and controlled by functionaries, who are brought up at the same gymnasium, finished at the same university, trained in the same system, exercised in the same books, initiated and hardened into the same ideas. Everything is uniform, and everything is stereotyped. If some original genius suggests an improvement on the old routine, he has all the inertia of corporate laziness and corporate prejudice against him; his scheme is almost certain of rejection, rarely certain even of examination; or if, by dint of talent and perseverance, he succeeds at length in inducing the heads of the department to adopt it, it is then enforced upon all the subordinates alike. It is either summarily rejected, or tyrannically introduced.

"The functionarism of education," says Mr. Laing, "the centralisation, under a department of government, of all educational establishments, from the university down to the A B C school; the appointment of all teachers, inspectors, and pro-

fessors by the state; and the requirement that all who teach shall have gone through a certain course of education and examination, and the prohibition of all teaching and school-keeping by any other than those licensed and approved of educational functionaries—has turned out a branch of the system dangerous to the state, and injurious to the character of the people. It has enabled a conclave of professors at the German universities to form the public mind on their own views and theories in politics, philosophy, and legislation, to indoctrinate all the youth of Germany—all who are to be public functionaries, from the highest to the lowest—all clergy, lawyers, teachers, schoolmasters, *all of whom must pass through their hands as students in order to be qualified for office*—with the same theories and speculations in religion, philosophy, and political and social science. The youth come out of this preparatory formation of mind for real life imbued with the very same opinion on all subjects, slaves of the lamp of one *genie*. . . . This is imminently dangerous to the state, because public opinion is not formed by the public, but by a *junta* of professors, who have the formation of the public mind. The ministers and all under them are formed as students in one school, over which the government has no control, for the members of the government are themselves formed in this school; *yet, from want of educational freedom, no counteracting opinions can be formed in the public mind.*"

The bureaucratic system presents an almost insuperable obstacle to any improvement in the civil or political institutions of the continental nations. In order to hold any office in the vast army of functionaries, a university education is required. Every *employé*, every writer, every thinker, must have gone through precisely the same training, must have sat at the feet of the same professors, and received the elements of his education in schools formed on the same model. Hence, if the people desire a change, the functionary class, who comprise nearly the whole education of the people, render it impossible to establish it, except at the price of a revolution, in which, whatever else may

be overthrown, functionarism still survives. If the sovereign wishes to effect any material administrative innovation, he finds himself nearly as powerless as his people, if the innovation involves any radical change of system. "He has, in fact, no class to choose his ministers from, even for the highest state offices, but men bred in the same principles and views as their predecessors, men originally *burschen* (students), afterwards *employés*. They are the only class in the social body from whom the sovereign can select qualified servants, no other class having the influence, interest, or knowledge necessary; and this class is formed in the same school, and with the same political education. He may change men, but not measures or principles, in his cabinet."

But though the class of functionaries offer a powerful element of stability and resistance to change, as far as ideas and systems and their own existence are concerned, they appear by no means so when dynasties and forms of government are in question. They constitute a species of administrative machinery which may be worked as well under one chief as under another; under the president of a republic as under an autocratic sovereign, under a foreign usurper as under a legitimate monarch. According to Mr. Laing, when Germany was occupied by the French under Napoleon, the established functionaries were found the ready and almost mechanical instruments of the most grievous exactions, which, without their organisation, French commissioners could scarcely have carried through. Only a few of the heads of departments had to be removed, and the rest of the machinery worked as effectively as ever. "This *beamptenstand*," says our author, "are ever ready to support any hero of the hour who has the good fortune to get hold of the reins of government at the point at which they are cen-

tralised. It is an element in the social state as dangerous to the sovereign as it is oppressive and burdensome to the people. Louis Philippe was deposed and set aside as easily as any *chef-de-bureau*. He was but a *chef-de-bureau* to his people, who knew only functionaries of one bureau or another as the leading class, and to his functionaries, who knew no other motive of action than promotion in their several departments by subserviency to their immediate chiefs."

Neither can the functionary class act the part of an aristocracy, in protecting the rights and freedom of the people against the encroachments of the crown. Their predominant idea is, necessarily, obedience to their immediate superiors; and this through every grade. They must execute the orders they receive. The slightest opposition or demur is punishable by removal, and removal is generally ruin. They are servants of the crown, and must obey the will and pleasure of their master. In one country only, so far as we know, where the bureaucratic system is established, has this evil been avoided.

"In Norway, a functionary once appointed, has, by the constitution, a property, a vested right, in his office. He cannot be dismissed without free trial, nor removed from one locality to another without his own consent; his income cannot be diminished, nor his duties increased without adequate compensation; he cannot be passed over in his turn for promotion without due cause assigned. In all these rights he has a court to appeal to, which is entirely independent of the executive, the legislature, or the department in which he serves. . . . The system works well in the limited circle of Norwegian affairs. We see functionaries speaking, voting, writing, and taking a leading place in opposition to or in favour of the measures of government, as freely as other people; and, during the reign of Bernadotte, which was a perpetual struggle to undermine or overturn the constitution, and establish autocracy, this independent body of functionaries was the third

element between the kingly power and the population of peasant proprietors, keeping both in their right constitutional places."

From what we have said, it is perfectly evident that republicanism and functionarism are incompatible existences; they are based on irreconcilably opposite and contradictory assumptions. The one assumes that the people can govern themselves, the other that they cannot; the one supposes the people to be wiser than their rulers, the other supposes the rulers to be wiser than the people; the one implies that each individual will manage his own affairs, and look after his own safety, better than any one else can do it for him, and that citizens are capable of uniting to do whatever must be done in concert, the other implies the reverse of all this. Now, either assumption may be true, or one may be true of one nation, and the other of another nation. But the two cannot be true at the same time, and of the same people.

The ablest chapter in Mr. Laing's book, is that which treats of the Prussian military system and its social consequences, as contrasted with that prevalent in this country. Since the abolition of the feudal system, and the establishment of standing armies, three different modes of recruiting the military force have been adopted in Western Europe; and the respective operation of them will well repay a careful study. The system of voluntary enlistment is that adopted in England. The *entrapping* plan is now abandoned; at least, each raw recruit is, as soon as he declares his desire to become a soldier, taken before a magistrate, who questions him as to his reasons, and explains to him the conditions of the service, and discharges him if he wishes to rescind his engagement; and it is not till these formalities have been gone through that the enlistment is complete. The soldier may enlist for fourteen or twenty-one years,

or for any indefinite term; but, generally speaking, when once a soldier, he is a soldier for life, or for all the active and efficient part of it. If he retires after a sufficient length of service, he is allowed a pension; if wounded or unfit for active duty, he is pensioned whenever he is discharged. This system has many obvious advantages: it relieves the great mass of the citizens from all military duties, and leaves them free to follow pacific and industrial occupations without injurious interruption; and it secures in the soldier the highest possible degree of efficiency as a military instrument. It has another signal advantage: in every country there are a number of unquiet spirits, men of turbulent tempers, unruly passions, idle and dissipated habits, who, if left at large, would be a constant source of trouble and disturbance to the community, and many of whom would go to augment the criminal population; but who, when drafted in the army—where their violent dispositions find, if we may say so, a legitimate vent—and subjected to that severe discipline which alone is adequate to subdue and utilise their wilder qualities, become really serviceable members of society, which they could not be made in any other line, or under any other system. An army composed, as ours mainly is, of such ingredients, must evidently require a far stricter training, and a far sterner control, than one which is selected indiscriminately from all classes and all characters—the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, the gentle, the cruel, and the stupid. And this is the reply to those who propose to assimilate our military discipline to that of the Continent: the two cases have no parallelism whatever.

The second plan is that of conscription, which prevails in France and Austria, where every year the required number of recruits are drawn by lot from the young men of suitable age and of every rank. They may, if

they wish and are able, pay for a substitute. These recruits serve in the ranks of the standing army for seven years, when, unless they wish to remain, they are discharged, and are re-absorbed into the general community, or lie, an unemployed, dangerous, and burdensome class, upon it.

The Prussian system Mr. Laing thus explains : There is a small permanent standing army, which is composed of those officers and men who have embraced the military *profession*, and which forms the nucleus of the vast military force of the country, and its training-school.

“Every male, without exception, in the whole population, is bound to serve three years, between his twentieth and twenty-fifth years, as a private in the ranks of a regiment of the line. Property, rank, occupation, business, give no claim to exemption; and no substitutes or *remplacants* are admitted, as in the French conscription system. Every man must serve as a private in the regiments of the line, whatever be his social position. . . . After three years’ service in the line, the young man is turned over to his district *landwehr* regiment of the *ersten aufgebot*, or, as we should call it, first for service. This division of the landwehr force is considered the army proper; it is liable, like the standing army, to serve in or out of the country; but in time of peace, to save expense, it is only embodied for manœuvre and exercise for a few weeks yearly. Its staff only is in constant pay. The division of the second *aufgebot* consists of all who have served their three years in the line and their two years in the first division of the landwehr, and are under forty years of age. These are considered trained soldiers, and men settled in peaceful occupations; and are, therefore, in time of peace, only assembled in small divisions, and in their own localities, for a few days’ exercise each year. The *landsturm* consists of all not in the service, or discharged from it by the completion of their term of service in the other divisions; and it is mustered and organised as well as the other divisions of the landwehr force. The principle of the system is, that every Prussian subject, without exception, shall pass through a military training of three years in the ranks of a

regiment of the line, and shall then be available during his whole life as a trained soldier in one or other of the divisions of the landwehr force, according to his age and fitness for military duty. The perfection of all the arrangements of his vast and complicated system, and the general fairness, impartiality, and economy with which it is worked, must raise the admiration of every traveller. But is it a good military system? Is it a good social system?"

The first consideration that strikes us is, that this system is by no means so economical as it appears at first sight. It is true you have an available trained force of at least 500,000 men, of which number little more than one-fifth are in receipt of regular pay. In 1835, however, the budget of the Prussian ministry-at-war exceeded 3,500,000*l.*, while all the other state expenses (exclusive of the debt) did not reach 2,900,000*l.* In the same year, the army and ordnance departments of Great Britain cost 7,500,000*l.*, out of a total of 20,000,000*l.* This does not look like great economy in the Prussian system. But this is very far from being the whole cost of it to the country, as is thus admirably explained by Mr. Laing:—

"The financial resources of every country depend upon the productive industry of the people, out of which alone taxes proceed; and if the productive industry of the people be diminished by three years of their time and labour being taken up in military service, by so much are the means of the state diminished. The productive as well as the military time of a man's life begins at twenty and ends about fifty years of age. These thirty years are his capital stock; and whatever he contributes to the finances of the state, directly or indirectly, must be earned within these thirty years. If one-tenth of this time be taken from him, and consumed in military service, he is so much the poorer, and the state is so much the poorer. The indirect loss to both is probably as great as the direct loss; for a man cannot turn at once from the habits of a military life to the habits of steady industry, and the sedentary occupations of civil life. If he has gone through an apprenticeship, and learned

a trade, before beginning his three years' service in a regiment, he must almost have to learn it over again, after three years' disuse of his working tools and working habits. He can never become an expert, quick workman in any handicraft. But, besides his three years of continuous service at the age most important to form the habits of the working man, his time is broken in upon, and his industry deranged, every year by his six or eight weeks' military service in his landwehr regiment. One-sixth, probably, of his year is consumed before he can return to his working habits.* All this is a dead loss to the state as well as to the individual. It diminishes the capacity of the aggregate body of individuals—the nation—to furnish the taxes necessary to move the numbers embodied and kept up as a landwehr in any military operation."

It is not easy to say how much of the inferiority of the continental to the English workman, in almost every department, is to be attributed to this mischievous interruption of his working education and his industrial habits.

Secondly. It is quite certain that in everything that regards the perfection of a military force, the Prussian system is very inferior to the English. It can never make either as perfect an individual soldier, nor as effective and wieldy an entire army. There may be more national enthusiasm; there may be a purer and higher moral tone; there may be a superior standard of education; there may be greater sympathy with the citizen, and an intense love of freedom, but there cannot be the same *esprit de corps*, not the same thorough discipline and subordination, nor the same perfect formation of soldierly ideas and habits.

"Three years' continuous service in the ranks of a regiment may, no doubt, be quite sufficient to train the soldier in all that

* When the landwehr was called out in the month of November, the transactions of one large commercial house in Rhenish Prussia were entirely and suddenly suspended, in consequence of *all the clerks* having been summoned to join their regiments.

regards drill, manœuvre, appearance, and what may be called the physical attainments; but what is of more importance, the *morale* of the soldier, his habits, mind, and character, if formed, cannot be kept up in civil life after his three years of service expire. The soul and spirit of military life, the tie between the soldier and officer, the knowledge of and confidence in each other, the tie of comradeship between soldier and soldier, the ties of attachment to the corps, its character, its honour, its colours, cannot be formed, or, if formed, cannot be kept up, by six weeks' parade and review exercise. The officers (who belong of necessity to the permanent army) become a distinct class, having no interest in the men of whom they lose sight after three years' service; and their regard and partiality naturally fall on the enlisted soldiers of their regiments who are always under their command."

Then, again, discipline inevitably suffers, as appeared more than once in 1848, from this false relative position of officers and men — the latter often being of the higher social rank.

"In such a military body as the landwehr, with all the people of social importance, education, and respectability in the ranks, and the officers, and non-commissioned officers especially, inferior in all those respects to the men they command, the subordination, the prompt, willing, blind obedience to even the inferior officers, which is the cement that holds together the units of a military force, cannot be relied on. It is not in human nature that the man of fortune, social importance, and education, the professional man, the merchant, the manufacturer, should look up to as his superior and implicitly obey, both on parade and in barracks, his corporal or sergeant, who may have been his own menial servant, journeyman, or labourer; or who, though a good drill-officer, may be an indifferent member of civil society. The autocratic government may place men of such incongruous stations and culture in a row, and call them an army, but it cannot amalgamate them into an efficient body for ordinary warfare. A war of enthusiasm, indeed, such as that of 1813—1814, may fuse such discordant materials into one mass so long as the heat is kept up. But wars of enthusiasm are among the rarest in history; and it

is discipline, stern discipline, that is alone worth anything when enthusiasm is wanting."

The Prussian government seem to have perceived some of these objections, and have done their best to obviate them by a general education, which considerably diminishes the distance and the contrast between different ranks, and also by the care it has taken to secure that the chief officers shall be chosen exclusively from the noble class, by requiring from them a scientific education such as few but nobles can afford; but still the evil exists and is felt.

A *third* weighty objection to the landwehr system is thus put by Mr. Laing, though we think he somewhat unfairly omits to state how much this is obviated, or rather mitigated, by the diffusion of education through the whole people, and through the ranks of the army also.

"The demoralisation of the youth of a nation by three years' service in a regiment of the line is one of the greatest evils of the system. Soldiers are not necessarily immoral men; but the enlisted soldier engaged for life, or for a long term of years, is generally a man whose character and conduct have ejected him from the ordinary occupations of civil life. His habits of steady application and industry are gone. He is demoralised in all that makes the useful, quiet, respectable citizen. He is too often a man given to debauchery and excess, when it does not interfere with his military duty. Think of a father or mother, in some country village, who have brought up a son in moral and religious habits, in innocence of evil, and in ideas suitable to their station and to the humble trade he is to live by, being compelled to send him for three years, at his outset in life, to join a regiment of the line in a large dissipated city like Berlin or Cologne, to associate with such companions! The moral tyranny of the system exceeds what was ever exercised before by any European government, and may well excuse the discontent of the Prussian subjects."

A *fourth* objection yet remains, which applies equally

to the conscription and the landwehr system — to any system, in fact, which sends back the soldier, after a limited or brief period of service, to mix and be absorbed into the rest of the community. His habits and character are formed by his military career — irrevocably formed if he has seen war, or served for seven years. He brings back habits and ideas wholly unsuited to the pacific and industrial occupations of civil life. He brings back the manners, the language, the desires of the garrison or the camp, and helps to diffuse these among his fellow-citizens, till the whole nation is at length leavened with the noxious influence. It is true that he also brings with him habits of order, neatness, and regularity, which are serviceable and compensating qualities ; but carries back with him, likewise, as the most formidable enemy to the peace and well being of society, warlike ambition, readiness in organisation, and military skill. The country is overrun with hundreds of thousands of men admirably trained “for treasons, stratagems, and wiles,” fit to bear their part in any civil war, fully competent to drill, discipline, and lead their fellows, and, in case of tumult, riot, or insurrection, able to meet the forces of the government and the friends of order on equal terms. An insurrection in England is put down by the military (in those rare cases where the civil authorities are unable to cope with it) easily, promptly, and almost without bloodshed or resistance. An *émeute* in Paris or Berlin becomes a bloody battle, because the malcontents are either themselves disbanded soldiers, or find thousands who are, to organise and lead them. On the Continent, an insurrection soon swells and degenerates into a civil war. We cannot have forgotten the commentary on this truth which was afforded by the sanguinary contest which deluged the streets of Paris in June, 1848 (and,

science, is the most patient and praiseworthy. Contradictory legislation. We needed; for in none is a false principle. We retraced; in none are its consequences have sufficed; we far reaching, and so irreparable. We have sufficed; we with each other, and

It is, therefore, our firm belief, while they suppress all its gloomy shadows, and cease.

a marked improvement. No error apparent in the surest signs and principles of the day, to which we and our impatient attention, lies in the unsound, exclusive, which our ancient somewhat maudlin tenderness with which in as normal fashion to regard the criminal and the with a principle. This feeling is in itself so amiable, so Christian has been (superficial glance at least), and has so much of only a superficial and rectitude for its foundation, that not only rapid, and a natural aptitude to degenerate into excess, but

we are disposed to regard the excess itself as a virtue, and are therefore little likely to guard against it. Selfishness is so instinctively felt to be the besetting sin, — "the epidemic malady of human nature" — that it is peculiarly difficult to persuade ourselves that we can ever be acting wrong when we know that we are acting unselfishly. And gentleness to the errors, and compassion towards the sufferings of others, are such adorning excellences in the individual, and in domestic life, that we listen with impatience and mistrust to the moralist, who would teach us that these sentiments, when carried into public affairs, and systematised in legislation, may often become eminently mischievous, and therefore highly culpable. Yet it is unquestionable that, though individuals may allow charity and compassion to guide them without going very far astray, yet the state, if it wishes to maintain a straight and safe career, must act upon principles as stern, as steady, and as comprehensive as those of Nature herself. And while, with pardonable pride and self-gratulation, we contrast the prying and impatient humanity of the

ay, with the hard and brutal indifference which
 d a former age, we are prone to forget, or to
 uch of selfish tenderness to our own feel-
 in this morbid and pampered sensitive-
 ble or the medicinal wretchedness of

to reflect," says Mr. Macaulay (vol. i.
 at the public mind of England has softened
 nas ripened; and that we have, in the course
 ages, become not only a wiser, but also a kinder,
 people. There is scarcely a page of the history or
 lighter literature of the seventeenth century which does
 not contain some proof that our ancestors were less
 humane than their posterity. The discipline of work-
 shops, of schools, of private families, though not more
 efficient than at present, was infinitely harsher. Masters,
 well born and bred, were in the habit of beating their
 servants. Pedagogues knew no way of imparting
 knowledge but by beating their pupils. Husbands, of
 decent station, were not ashamed to beat their wives.
 The implacability of hostile factions was such as we can
 scarcely conceive. Whigs were disposed to murmur,
 because Stafford was suffered to die without seeing his
 bowels burned before his face. Tories reviled and in-
 sulted Russell, as his coach passed from the Tower to
 the scaffold, in Lincoln's Inn Fields. As little mercy
 was shown by the populace to sufferers of a humbler
 rank. If an offender was put in the pillory, it was well
 if he escaped with life, from the shower of brickbats and
 paving stones. If he was tied to the cart's tail, the
 crowd pressed round him, imploring the hangman to
 give it the fellow well, and make him howl. Gentlemen
 arranged parties of pleasure to Bridewell on Court days,
 for the purpose of seeing the wretched women who beat
 hemp there whipped. A man pressed to death for re-
 fusing to plead, a woman burned for coining, excited

nising model, that England must look for safety and amelioration. She has much to do, and more to undo. She has many false steps to retrace, many unjust laws to repeal: but it is in the removal of old restrictions, not in the imposition of new ones,—in the invigoration of the municipal, not in the adoption of the centralising, principle,—that her prosperity and progress must be sought. Without seeking aid from any foreign intermixture, she has within her own system the means and materials of rescue from the errors of the past, by prompt and unflinching loyalty to those eternal principles of justice and freedom, which work ill only when they work in chains, which seem questionable only when seen in fragments or in disguise, which never lead backwards and never lead astray, except when followed partially, timidly, and with a halting and unstable mind.

Six or eight years ago, when Mr. Laing published his first “Notes of a Traveller,” he was a zealous admirer of much of the continental system, which he now, after a second visit, and on mature consideration, has learned to condemn. Let us hear the conclusions of his ripened understanding.

“The traveller who desires to form a sound opinion of the social condition of the continental people should visit the Continent repeatedly, and at various points. His first impressions will require revision; for they are generally magnified and embellished by novelty, or perhaps distorted by ignorance and prejudice. . . . The three new elements which have entered into, and become predominant in, the social system of the Continent since the French Revolution—viz., the diffusion of landed property, functionarism, and the landwehr institution—have not certainly as yet promoted the well-being, liberty, peace, and good government of the continental people. The tendency at the present day of these new social elements is to a retrogression of society in civilisation, and not to an advance.”

UNSOUND SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY.*

PERHAPS the two features which have most distinguished the public mind of Britain during the last few years are, a quick perception and conscientious sense of our social evils,—and an entire want of system and philosophy in our mode of treating and regarding them. Till the continental convulsions of the last twelve months threw for the time all other matters into the shade, the public attention seemed to be fixing itself upon the miseries and maladies of our population with an almost morbid intensity; and with an impatience of endurance, and a craving for action, as alarming to the philosopher as it was encouraging and consolatory to the mere philanthropist. Most of the topics which had formerly absorbed the interest of the nation were settled and forgotten. The agitating questions of foreign policy, parliamentary reform, and religious toleration, were well nigh disposed of; and the vast field of colonial policy which for some years to come will probably occupy the front rank in popular and parliamentary interest, had as yet scarcely been opened. No wonder, therefore, that the regular campaigns of party warfare, from the absence of those great subjects which had divested them of their littleness, were beginning to be trite and wearisome. In the pause from conflicts, both internal and external,

* From the "Edinburgh Review."

1. *Political and Social Economy, its practical Applications.* (From "Chambers's Instructive and Entertaining Library.") By JOHN HILL BURTON. Edinburgh: 1849.

2. *Evils of England, Social and Economical.* By A LONDON PHYSICIAN. London: 1849.

3. *Tactics for the Times.* By J. C. SYMONS. London: 1849.

which ensued, people had leisure to look at home, and to inquire into their domestic position. And what they saw might well stagger and appal them. Meanwhile, benevolent individuals had long been busy in examining and exposing those particular grievances or sufferings which had severally attracted their imagination or their pity. Each philanthropist had his pet evil. Some mused and discoursed on that congeries of undigested symptoms which they termed "The Condition-of-England Question." Others, less comprehensive in their sympathy, or less ambitious in their zeal, were content to divide the labours of social reformation. One man considered the factory population as his peculiar charge. Another took coal mines under his especial protection. A third organised a crusade against drunkenness; a fourth occupied himself with the statistics of education; a fifth affected juvenile criminals; a sixth paupers; a seventh looked after slaves; an eighth threw his ægis over the natives in remote colonies;—till the unfortunate agricultural peasants were the only portion of our population that seemed neglected and forgotten. No "Protector of the Aborigines" sprung up for them: For those on whom this office should naturally have devolved, were busy in other fields.

Two great benefits have resulted from this wide-spread and irregular activity. In the first place, we have collected an invaluable mass of information on the condition, moral and physical, of nearly every branch of the poorer classes, to guide us in our efforts for their amelioration; and, secondly, we have at last penetrated the public mind with the sincere conviction that these matters possess for us a personal, paramount, and urgent interest with which no question of foreign policy or party struggle can for a moment vie. The task of restoring health and soundness to a society so fearfully diseased as ours unquestionably is, is on all hands acknowledged

to be at once the noblest, and the most imperative, to which citizens or statesmen can now direct their energies.

But the mass of dismal and disheartening facts which these investigations have brought to light, has a strong tendency to disseminate an impression at once mischievous and untrue. We hear it frequently assumed, that these evils are novel and increasing; that our social condition is fast degenerating; that we are nationally on the brink of a precipice, from which time is scarcely left us to draw back. Now, that this impression is not only untrue, but the very reverse of truth, is unquestionable, to all who have either read history in detail or who have been long actively engaged in the labours of philanthropy — to all, in fact, but those whose attention to these subjects has been of recent date, and whose knowledge of the evil has therefore burst upon them suddenly. Those who have been longest, most profoundly and practically conversant with “the wounds and bruises and putrefying sores” of the body politic — who have been well aware that, “from the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness therein” — are the last to be dissatisfied with our progress hitherto, or to despair of our progress in future. It is not Arkwright or the elder Peel who would quarrel with the present discipline and ventilation of our factories. It is not Howard or Mrs. Fry who would now be horror-struck at the condition of our prisons; nor Romilly or Mackintosh who would complain of the atrocities and enormities of our actual criminal jurisprudence. Mr. Macaulay’s admirable remarks in the third chapter of his History, on comparisons of this kind so often loosely made to our disadvantage, deserve the deep consideration of those who have been startled either into terror or despondency by the pictures of vice and wretchedness which recent inquiries have laid bare.

“The more carefully,” says he, “we examine the history of the past, the more reason we shall find to dissent from those who imagine that our age has been fruitful of new social evils. The truth is, that the evils are, with scarcely an exception, old. That which is new, is the intelligence which discerns and the humanity which remedies them. The more we study the annals of the past, the more shall we rejoice that we live in a merciful age,—in an age in which cruelty is abhorred, and in which pain, even when deserved, is inflicted reluctantly, and from a sense of duty. Every class doubtless has gained greatly by this great moral change : but the class which has gained most is the poorest, the most dependent, and the most defenceless.

“The general effect of the evidence seems hardly to admit of doubt. Yet, in spite of evidence, many will still image to themselves the England of the Stuarts as a more pleasant country than the England in which we live. It may at first sight seem strange that society, while constantly moving forward with eager speed, should be constantly looking back with tender regret. But these two propensities, inconsistent as they may appear, can easily be resolved into the same principle. Both spring from our impatience of the state in which we actually are. That impatience, while it stimulates us to surpass preceding generations, disposes us to overrate their happiness. It is, in some sense, unreasonable and ungrateful in us to be constantly discontented with a condition which is constantly improving. But, in truth there is constant improvement, precisely because there is constant discontent. If we were perfectly satisfied with the present, we should cease to labour, to contrive, and to save with a view to the future. And it is natural that, being dissatisfied with the present, we should form a two favourable estimate of the past.

“In truth we are under a deception similar to that

which misleads the traveller in the Arabian desert. Beneath the caravan all is dry and bare; but far in advance, and far in the rear, is the semblance of refreshing waters. The pilgrims hasten forward, and find nothing but sand, where, an hour before, they had seen a lake. They turn their eyes and see a lake where, an hour before, they were toiling through sand. A similar illusion seems to haunt nations through every stage of the long progress from poverty and barbarism to the highest degrees of opulence and civilisation. But if we resolutely chase the mirage backward, we shall find it recede before us into the regions of fabulous antiquity. It is now the fashion to place the golden age of England in times when noblemen were destitute of comforts, the want of which would be intolerable to a modern footman, when farmers and shopkeepers breakfasted on loaves the very sight of which would raise a riot in a modern workhouse, when men died faster in the purest country air than they now die in the most pestilential lanes in our towns, and when men died faster in the lanes of our towns than they now die on the coast of Guiana. We, too, shall in our turn be outstripped, and in our turn be envied. It may well be, in the twentieth century, that the peasant of Dorsetshire may think himself miserably paid with fifteen shillings a week; that the carpenter at Greenwich may receive ten shillings a day; that labouring men may be as little used to dine without meat as they now are to eat rye bread; that sanitary police and medical discoveries may have added several more years to the average length of human life; that numerous comforts and luxuries which are now unknown, or confined to a few, may be within the reach of every diligent and thrifty working man. And yet it may then be the mode to assert that the increase of wealth and the progress of science have benefited the few at the expense of the many; and to talk of the reign of Queen Victoria as

the time when England was truly merry England, when all classes were bound together by brotherly sympathy, when the rich did not grind the faces of the poor, and when the poor did not envy the splendour of the rich." — Vol. i. p. 426.

But the impression of which we speak is not only incorrect ; it is noxious, as all incorrect conceptions are. It was a profound remark of Augustus Schlegel's,—“ The illusion of a past golden age is one of the greatest hindrances to the approach of the golden age that should come. *If the golden age is past, it was not genuine.*” The idea that we are degenerating—that our national evils and our social maladies are increasing upon us—can scarcely fail to have a paralysing influence upon our energies. If the exertions of the last generation—which, though often misdirected, were sincere, indefatigable, and sometimes almost gigantic—failed to mitigate the intensity, or arrest the progress, of these ills, there is reason enough to drive the boldest among us to despair. What are we, that we should hope to succeed where predecessors, at least as able, as strenuous, as benevolent as ourselves, have utterly and signally failed ! But the truth is, that the efforts of these our predecessors were crowned with an appropriate measure of success. So have been our own. And it is only by cherishing this faith, that we can effectually nerve ourselves for the further toils and struggles of our continued war with evil.

But this incorrect impression as to the remoter past is injurious in another way. It misdirects our efforts. It disposes us to *try back*. If our ancestors were really happier, wiser, more successful than we,—if the condition of the people were really more satisfactory in those days than in these,—there would be a powerful argument for attempting to retrace our steps, and striving to replace society in the position it occupied in generations

past. A double blunder, this: for not only would the operation prove an impossible one—but, if achieved, would be only an aggravation of our difficulties. As long as these ideas are confined to secluded and speculative thinkers, they produce merely feeble poetry and faulty philosophy. When, however, as in our days, they penetrate the arena of actual statesmanship, and endeavour to force their way into life and action, they not only divert attention from a sounder channel, but lead to practical mistakes of the worst kind. The crude and boyish theories, the vague and declamatory language, of the Young England section of our legislators, have given us the measure at once of the wild impracticability and unsoundness of their views, and of the mischievous confusion which might be anticipated if they were to take strong hold of the national mind. The error of these men is, that they carry the conceptions of poetry into the unsuitable atmosphere of public life. Policy, with them, is not a matter of science, but of taste; and their opinions are selected according as they harmonise with fancy, not as they square with fact. They dream of a beautiful past which had no existence—and would compel the actual present into conformity with that unreal and shadowy vision.

Moreover, this erroneous notion of our deterioration has a further mischievous operation,—it puts us in a hurry. It generates the impression that there is no time to be lost; that evils are increasing upon us with such frightful rapidity that, if we do not act at once, action will come too late; that there is no space nor leisure for deliberation, for experiment, for caution. To speak colloquially, the public gets into a fuss. We act hastily, and therefore we act wrong.* In statesmanship, more than in any other branch of practical

* Lord Melbourne used to say that the only thing that thoroughly alarmed him was, to hear people say, “*Something must be done.*”

science, is the most patient and profound deliberation needed ; for in none is a false step so difficult to be retraced ; in none are its consequences so ramified, so far reaching, and so irreparable.

It is, therefore, our firm belief that our present, with all its gloomy shadows and its difficult enigmas, is yet a marked improvement on the past ; and that one of the surest signs and proofs of this, is our sensitiveness to, and our impatience under, those disorders and distresses which our ancestors either did not observe, or acquiesced in as normal, unavoidable, or unimportant. And it is with a profound conviction that our progress hitherto has been, on the whole, satisfactory, and that it depends only on ourselves to make our future advance far more rapid, steady, and illimitable, that we venture to point out a few of the mistakes which have rendered many of our efforts less fruitful of good than they might appear to have deserved. Zealous, energetic, indefatigable benevolence is extant in overflowing abundance. It needs only the guidance of sound principle to produce effects of which statesmen and philanthropists scarcely yet dare to dream.

The great difficulty is happily got over already. Our attention is fully awakened on the subject ; our sympathies are almost nervously alive ; our ears are eagerly open to any suggestions even from the most incapable and inexperienced ; for both our fears and our humanity are effectually alarmed.

But unfortunately, though an eminently humane, we are not in general a philosophic, nor a systematic people. In this respect we and our neighbours the French are at the opposite poles of the intellectual world. Their minds are scientific and mathematical to a fault ; ours are practical and empiric to a fault. They are for ever recurring to first principles on the most trivial occasions ; we eschew all reference to such,

even in the most momentous matters, with a shrinking instinct which partakes of conscious incapacity. In the common arrangements of their household or their family, —in the conduct of the most paltry cases in their courts of law,—in the formation or amendment of their constitutions,—the French proceed by line and square, to a degree which appears to an Englishman to savour both of the pedant and the schoolboy. They love to have everything *in seipso totus, teres, atque rotundus*. In all discussions upon social questions the Frenchman starts from the “laws of nature” and the “rights of man.” The Englishman seldom goes further back than the precedents which his own history can furnish him. He is afraid to adopt the most valuable and incontestable improvement unless he can find some warrant for it in the past; and the surest way of inducing him to go forward, is to persuade him that he is going backward. The French commence their national ameliorations *ab initio*, and upon principle; we attack our social maladies zealously indeed, but singly and empirically, not scientifically. We dread all systematic steps; we mistrust everything that proceeds upon, or seems to confirm, a theory. We are not only satisfied with, but actually partial to, patchwork; and are for ever putting a new piece into an old garment. Of two extremes this is unquestionably the safest and the best: but still it is an extreme, and therefore an error. We attack each evil as it arises, or rather as it first strikes our view, as if it stood single and isolated, without reference either to its causes or its context. We seldom dream of tracing back, as we easily might do, a host of social mischiefs to one common source or seed, and then, by removing that, leave the manifold consequences to die out for want of nourishment. The plan we adopt is the idle, shallow, and wasteful proceeding of cutting off each head of the ever-growing hydra as it appears.

Hence the voluminous, confused, and contradictory character of much of our remedial legislation. We have ten edicts where one would have sufficed; we have many that are inconsistent with each other, and many that aggravate the virulence, while they suppress or vary the symptoms, of the disease.

The particular tendency to error apparent in the prevalent social philosophy of the day, to which we wish to direct special attention, lies in the unsound, exaggerated, and somewhat maudlin tenderness with which it is now the fashion to regard the criminal and the pauper. This feeling is in itself so amiable, so Christian (on a superficial glance at least), and has so much of justice and rectitude for its foundation, that not only has it a natural aptitude to degenerate into excess, but we are disposed to regard the excess itself as a virtue, and are therefore little likely to guard against it. Selfishness is so instinctively felt to be the besetting sin,—“the epidemic malady of human nature”—that it is peculiarly difficult to persuade ourselves that we can ever be acting wrong when we know that we are acting unselfishly. And gentleness to the errors, and compassion towards the sufferings of others, are such adorning excellences in the individual, and in domestic life, that we listen with impatience and mistrust to the moralist, who would teach us that these sentiments, when carried into public affairs, and systematised in legislation, may often become eminently mischievous, and therefore highly culpable. Yet it is unquestionable that, though individuals may allow charity and compassion to guide them without going very far astray, yet the state, if it wishes to maintain a straight and safe career, must act upon principles as stern, as steady, and as comprehensive as those of Nature herself. And while, with pardonable pride and self-gratulation, we contrast the prying and impatient humanity of the

present day, with the hard and brutal indifference which characterised a former age, we are prone to forget, or to ignore, how much of selfish tenderness to our own feelings may lurk in this morbid and pampered sensitiveness to the inevitable or the medicinal wretchedness of those around us.

"It is pleasing to reflect," says Mr. Macaulay (vol. i. p. 424.), "that the public mind of England has softened while it has ripened; and that we have, in the course of ages, become not only a wiser, but also a kinder, people. There is scarcely a page of the history or lighter literature of the seventeenth century which does not contain some proof that our ancestors were less humane than their posterity. The discipline of workshops, of schools, of private families, though not more efficient than at present, was infinitely harsher. Masters, well born and bred, were in the habit of beating their servants. Pedagogues knew no way of imparting knowledge but by beating their pupils. Husbands, of decent station, were not ashamed to beat their wives. The implacability of hostile factions was such as we can scarcely conceive. Whigs were disposed to murmur, because Stafford was suffered to die without seeing his bowels burned before his face. Tories reviled and insulted Russell, as his coach passed from the Tower to the scaffold, in Lincoln's Inn Fields. As little mercy was shown by the populace to sufferers of a humbler rank. If an offender was put in the pillory, it was well if he escaped with life, from the shower of brickbats and paving stones. If he was tied to the cart's tail, the crowd pressed round him, imploring the hangman to give it the fellow well, and make him howl. Gentlemen arranged parties of pleasure to Bridewell on Court days, for the purpose of seeing the wretched women who beat hemp there whipped. A man pressed to death for refusing to plead, a woman burned for coining, excited

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less sympathy than is now felt for a galled horse, or an overdriven ox. Fights, compared with which a boxing match is a refined and humane spectacle, were among the favourite diversions of a large part of the town. Multitudes assembled to see gladiators hack each other to pieces with deadly weapons, and shouted with delight when one of the combatants lost a finger or an eye. The prisons were hells on earth, seminaries of every crime, and of every disease. At the assizes, the lean and yellow culprits brought with them from their cells to the dock, an atmosphere of stench and pestilence, which sometimes avenged them signally on bench, bar, and jury. But on all this misery society looked with profound indifference. Nowhere could be found that restless and sensitive compassion which has, in our time, extended a powerful protection to the factory child, to the Hindoo widow, to the negro slave—which pries into the stores and water-casks of every emigrant ship, which winces at every lash laid on the back of a drunken soldier, which will not suffer the thief in the hulks to be ill-fed or overworked, and which has repeatedly endeavoured to save the life even of the murderer. It is true that compassion ought, like all other feelings, to be under the government of reason ; and has, for want of such government, produced some ridiculous and some deplorable effects.”

This sensitive aversion to the infliction or the sight of pain is, in truth, the characteristic, and the especial peril, of the practical social philosophy of the day. There is a general disposition to regard all the wretched as simply *unfortunate* ; to shrink at once from *the infliction* of the punishment which the law assigns to crime, and from *the spectacle* of the punishment which nature has allotted to idleness, imprudence, and excess. This is an amiable extreme, undoubtedly, but still an extreme to be avoided ; and not the less dangerous for

the gentle aspect it puts on. Let us set aside for the present our treatment of criminals, and devote a few pages to the consideration of the errors in the prevalent views of pauperism.

The original idea of a Poor-law was, an arrangement to compel idlers and vagrants to work: the modern form which the conception has assumed, is a machine to support them out of the earnings of those who do work. The three wants of man—the only wants of his which strictly deserve the name of necessities—the only wants indispensable enough to a tolerable existence, to scourge the indolent from sloth, to rouse the stupid to vivacious toil, or to stimulate the savage to those exertions which gradually lead him on to civilisation,—are food, shelter, and clothing. The Poor-law, according to the popular view of it, is an arrangement for supplying these gratis, to all whom want of will, want of capacity, or want of forethought has left destitute of them. It is a contrivance for relieving every one, as soon as his privations reach the point of actual want of any of those requirements, want of which is the original stimulus to all exertion. It assumes, as its axiomatic foundation, that the idle *have a right* to share the earnings of the industrious, *provided only that their idleness shall have brought them to destitution*. It lays down a principle which, logically reasoned out, is socialism; and which, legitimately and consistently followed out in practice, would speedily work its own cure, by the manifestation of its intolerable and fatal consequences. In *England* we are slow to perceive the error of our theoretic views—because national good sense, and national good feeling, generally interpose to prevent them from being carried out to those extremes of practice which would demonstrate their unsoundness. But in *Ireland* there is no such corrective, and no such screen; a legislative blunder, once launched, is there allowed to sail on un-

may have caused the mischief, must not call upon the individual sufferer to bear its unmitigated pressure.

We admit the plea ; and we admit it the more readily because it leads us straight to the heart and marrow of the question. For, while admitting the propriety of a provision for the destitute in some form or other, under actual, existing circumstances, we deny *in toto* the abstract right of the poor to assistance from the funds of others, *as a claim*. A provision for the destitute, on our view of the matter, is not a duty which, as a general proposition, society owes to its poorer members, but a debt that a *society which has wronged its poorer members* owes them as compensation and amends.

We cannot conceive on what other rational basis the poor can have a *claim* upon the possessions of the rich, or the idle on the earnings of the industrious. The poor man, like the rich man, has a right to the produce of his industry, and to his realised property, (which is the produce of *his* industry, or of the industry of some one who has bestowed it upon him) ; — he has a right, like every other member of society, to what he *possesses*, and to what he *earns*, — but to nothing more. The naked demand of the poor to share the wealth of the rich, is, as we have said before, simple, undisguised communism. The demand of the labourer for employment — his notion that he has a *right to have work found for him*, and that, if he is willing to work, he is entitled to be fed — is, when submitted to the test of reason, a clear absurdity. If the Devonshire ploughman has a right to a customer for his ploughing, or the Sheffield mechanic for his scissors, the manufacturer must have an equal right to a customer for his cloth, and the poet for his verses ; the farmer to a remunerating purchaser for his corn, the lawyer to his brief, and the clergyman to his cure. How many diligent and hungry barristers are at least as anxious after employment as the peasant or the

artisan ? But do they ever commit the folly of demanding it as a right ? — of insisting that a client shall go to law in order that they may gain a living by conducting his case ? — or even of requiring their overworked brethren to give them a portion of their labour and their fees ? How many hundreds of Manchester cotton-spinners or Leeds clothiers have their warehouses crammed with goods, which they desire only to sell at the most paltry profit, or often even at prime cost ? But do they ever stultify themselves by requiring the state to compel unwilling customers to purchase from them articles which they do not want ? And is the day-labourer at all more rational in demanding work from a farmer who does not need his services, and has already as many hands as he can profitably employ ? To compel the employer to use and pay for labour *which he does not want*, — i. e. to give wages against his will, — is obviously the same injustice, and the same oppression, as to compel the labourer to sell his labour against his will, — to work for an employer when he would prefer to be idle, or thinks he can dispose of his exertions to greater advantage elsewhere. In the one case you forcibly seize upon a man's money, in the other case upon his toil ; in both cases you are guilty of the robbery of obliging a man to part with his property against his will, and without an adequate equivalent.

Let us look this matter, then, honestly and boldly in the face ; and no longer allow ourselves to be deluded by words which have no corresponding ideas attached to them. Labour, like corn, calico, or broadcloth, is a *commodity*, which, like any other commodity, will follow the usual laws of supply and demand — will find purchasers when it is wanted, and in the quantity in which it is wanted : and to compel people to purchase it who do not want it, is as patent a tyranny, and to ask for this compulsion is as blind a selfishness, in the case of

this commodity, as in the case of any other. The only circumstance which can complicate the question,—the only circumstance which can cloud the crystal clearness, or invalidate the irrefragable soundness of the conclusion,—occurs when *either the supply of labour has been artificially increased, or the demand for it artificially diminished*. Such artificial interference the interferers may be justly called upon to compensate, to counteract, or to undo. In this nutshell, to our apprehension, lies the whole question of a Poor-law.

We shall be much aided in arriving at a clear view of the merits of the case by a very simple subdivision. There are *three classes* of destitute (*i. e.* of those poor who need aid in order to enable them to live;—first, those whom society has made destitute by selfish or injudicious legislation, by sins of commission or neglect;—secondly, those who have become destitute through their own fault, or that of their parents; and, thirdly, those who have become destitute through unavoidable casualty, through calamities which could not reasonably have been anticipated—by the visitation of God, as we may say. Each of these classes requires a special and appropriate treatment; whereas both public law and public feeling at present lump them together, and deal with them as a homogeneous mass.

I. And, first, as to those of whose destitution society must bear the blame. Towards these unhappy individuals the duty of society is clear. It must redeem the past neglect, correct the past mistakes, unmake, in short, or efface the class, as speedily as possible, and assist to support it till effaced.

There are three ways in which society may promote and create destitution;—by absorbing in taxation an undue proportion of the produce of industry,—by undue encouragement to population, thereby augmenting the supply of labour,—and by improper restrictions

on trade and industry, thereby diminishing the demand for labour. It is impossible to deny that in England we have been guilty of all these injustices. But it is equally certain that we have retraced our steps, and that we now offend in these ways no longer. In the first of these errors the poor were necessarily passive, and therefore innocent; in the two others they must share with the state the blame and the penalty; since, however injudicious or restrictive be the policy of the government, it is always in the power of the people themselves to insure a due remuneration for their labour, by restricting the supply to the demand,—by refusing, in spite of encouragement, to increase the population beyond those numbers, whom industry and enterprise can employ at remunerative wages.

This amount of good sense and self-denial, however, we have perhaps scarcely a right at present to require from them, when we remember how deplorably the spread of sound education among them has been retarded by our miserable sectarian animosities,—how little has been done to teach them those elementary economic laws, on the sedulous observance of which their worldly welfare depends,—how much is still done in an opposite direction in many parishes, by farmers and poor-law guardians to favour the married at the expense of the single,—how many of our provincial clergy and philanthropists, and how preponderating a proportion of the periodical press, are occupied, even at this day, in preaching up slavish dependence upon charity, and in crying down the virtues of providence and self-reliance, with a mingled recklessness and fanaticism which deserves the strongest reprobation. This, however, must be left to the natural correctives of time and circumstance. Now that the state has unfettered industry, and removed all unfair and oppressive taxation from the poor, all that justice can further claim

from it is, that it shall, in the most judicious way that can be suggested, maintain those who really can find no employment, till, in the progress of prosperity, a period arrives (which, to judge by the rapidity with which our national resources are developed, cannot be far distant) when the demand for labour shall have overtaken the supply; and then to announce, that for the future the fate of all must depend on their own foresight, and their own exertions.

II. The second class is by far the most numerous; and it is in dealing with this class, that the radical error of our social philosophy is most apparent and most injurious. The idle, the dissolute, the dawdling,—the Irish peasant, who will beg for a penny rather than work for a shilling;—the Irish fisherman, who burns his boats for firewood, and pawns his nets, instead of using them to fish with;—the agricultural labourer, who waits listlessly in his hovel till work finds him out, instead of diligently setting out to seek it in every direction for himself, and who remains a burden on his parish, when manufacturing enterprise in the next town is hampered and delayed for want of hands;—the Sheffield grinder, who being able to earn a guinea a-day, will only work two days in the week, and drinks the other five;—the spinners and weavers in manufacturing towns, who waste hundreds of thousands of pounds in *strikes* for higher wages, which always end in the impoverishment of both themselves and their employers, and in leaving numbers of them permanently unprovided;—the unionists, who, like the weavers of Norwich, the shipbuilders and sawyers of Dublin, and the lace-makers of Nottingham, have, by violence and unreasonable demands, driven away trade from their respective localities;—and, finally, the thousands who, in spite of exhortation, in spite of the bitter warnings of experience, persist in spending every week the last

farthing of their earnings, as if prosperity, and youth, and health could always last :—all these are the laborious architects of their own ill fortune,—all these are destitute by their own act, their own folly, their own guilt. Those parents, again, who marry with no means of bringing up a family, with no provision for the future, no sure and ample support even for the present ;—those who (like a hand-loom weaver whom we knew) bring up eleven children to an overstocked and expiring trade, which, even to themselves, affords only insufficient earnings and unsteady employment ;—and those who spend in wastefulness and drinking wages which, carefully husbanded, might secure a future maintenance for their offspring ;—these all bring into the world paupers, who are destitute by their parents' culpability, —and the sins of the father are visited upon the children.

Now, with regard to these classes, whatever aid the sentiments of Christian charity may prompt us, as individuals, and in each individual case, to administer, or however it may be occasionally necessary for the state to interpose for the actual salvation of *life*, it is important to pronounce distinctly that, on no principle of social right or justice, have they any claim to share the earnings or the savings of their more prudent, more energetic, more self-denying fellow-citizens. They have made for themselves the hard bed they lie on. They have sinned against the plainest laws of nature, and must be left to the corrective which nature has “in that case made and provided ;” —a corrective which is certain to operate in the end, if only we do not step in to counteract it by regulations dictated by plausible and pardonable, but shallow and short-sighted, humanity. But let us not lose sight of the indubitable truth, that *if we stand between the error and its consequence, we stand*

between the evil and its cure,—if we intercept the penalty we perpetuate the sin.

Nor can it be said that, in contending that improvidence, idleness, dissipation, and early marriages should be allowed to encounter their natural fruit and salutary punishment among the poor, we are guilty of any partiality or special harshness. We demand no more from them than from all other classes. Privation and wretchedness are the allotted consequences and correctives of these vices in all other ranks,—why should the lowest be exempted from the common law? Why should we enact that the poor alone should be idle and imprudent, yet never come to want?—should be reckless and wasteful, and yet be fed at the cost of the sober and the frugal?—why should they alone be allowed to marry without the smallest actual or prospective provision for a family, yet be guaranteed that their children shall never sink into lower poverty than themselves?

Let us not be misrepresented. We are not contending that the poor should not marry, because they are already too numerous for the labour market to draft off. We contend only that the poor, like nearly all the middle classes—like the majority even of the higher classes—should not marry—have no right to marry—till they have made some provision for the maintenance of the expected family. Marriage is an enjoyment, the claim to possess which must, in every rank, be purchased by previous industry, economy, and prudence. No respectable shop-keeper, no merchant's son, no educated lawyer, no younger branch of an aristocratic family, thinks of marrying till he can support a wife in decency and comfort. If he does, his whole life is probably one long penalty—one drear repentance. Thousands accordingly remain unmarried through life, from inability to procure the means which alone would make marriage justifiable. Is it right to call upon such to support

those who have spurned at all similar feelings of justice and self-restraint? Can any reason be assigned for making a distinction between the classes—for imposing this restraint upon the rich, and exonerating the poor?

“‘Every one has a right to live.’ We will suppose this granted,” says Mr. Mill (*Pol. Econ.* vol. vi. p. 428.). “But no one has a right to bring creatures into life to be supported by other people. Whoever means to stand upon the first of these rights must renounce all pretensions to the last. If a man cannot support even himself unless others help him, those others are entitled to say that they do not also undertake the support of all the offspring which it is physically possible for him to summon into the world. Yet there are abundance of writers and public speakers, including many of most ostentatious pretensions to high feelings, whose views of life are so truly brutish, that they see hardship in preventing paupers from breeding hereditary paupers in the very workhouse itself! Posterity will one day ask, with astonishment, what sort of people it could be among whom such preachers could find proselytes.

“It is conceivable that the state might guarantee employment at ample wages to all who are born. But if it does this, it is bound, in self-protection, and for the sake of every purpose for which government exists, to provide that no person shall be born without its consent. If the ordinary and natural motives to self-restraint are removed, others must be substituted. Restrictions on marriage, at least equivalent to those existing in some of the German states, or *severe penalties* on those who have children when unable to support them, would then be indispensable. Society may feed the necessitous, if it takes their multiplication under its control; or it may leave the last to their discretion, if it abandons the first to their own care. But it cannot take half of the one course and half of the other. Let

it choose that which circumstances or the public sentiment render most expedient. But it cannot with impunity take the feeding on itself, and leave the multiplying free."

III. If the two first classes of destitute persons were dealt with on sound principles,—the first by removing the causes which have induced or which excuse their destitution, and assisting them till time shall have effaced them, or till national prosperity shall have absorbed them;—the second, by allowing the natural consequences of their folly to arouse them to prudence and exertion, aided only by such *uncertain* yet liberal succour as private benevolence will always be ready to afford to the struggling and the sober,—*the third* class, the destitute by casualty, will be found reduced to a very narrow and manageable compass. Such destitution from accident or unavoidable misfortune is not unfrequent in any class: even in the middle ranks, in proportion to their numbers, such afflictions are probably as frequent as in the lowest. Those whom Mr. Wakefield ingeniously designates as "the uneasy classes," contribute largely to it. The skilled artisan, in receipt of high wages, in constant employment, possessed of moderate savings, whose circumstances and prospects might have seemed to justify him in marrying, but who is cut off in the prime of life by inevitable accident, or disabled by uninduced disease, leaves his wife and family among the destitute by casualty. The naval or military man, debarred by illness from all chance of advancing in his profession, or whose prospects are ruined by the death of an influential relative, may be classed under the same category. The merchant, who has been reduced from affluence by the roguery or the bankruptcy of others; the single ladies, whose income has been secured on turnpike trusts or West India estates; the clergyman, whose professional career has,

from any unforeseen occurrence, been suddenly closed—may all be considered to belong to the same classification. This class—the destitute who have fallen from a higher fortune, not by their own fault, but by the visitation of God—furnish accordingly the highest and the best field for the exercise of Christian charity—for the display of that active, restless, indefatigable, benevolence, which is the proud characteristic of our age and country; and which (were all less valid and legitimate claims upon it negated and put aside by the operation of the principles we have advocated) would not only amply suffice to meet all such demands, but would, by being confined within its proper channel, and directed to its fit recipients, rapidly recover all its readiness, all its beauty, all its reflex action on the donor. The man who is compelled to contribute a large portion of his income to the support and encouragement of idleness and self-indulgence, is both less able and less willing to relieve more deserving cases of distress, and becomes more surly and suspicious with regard to all such cases. The application of sound and unwavering principles to the two first classes would ensure the more complete and effective relief of the third. The destitution of the former would soon be effaced by the natural operation of unchecked economic laws;—while the destitution of the latter would be relieved as rapidly as it appeared, by that individual kindness which nature and Christianity have alike allotted as its cure.

Our philosophy will by many be termed stern and harsh; but if it be sound, there can be no question that it is the truest and the tenderest mercy. That physician shows the most genuine sympathy with the patient who resolutely adopts the treatment which will soonest and most effectually eradicate his malady: and that assuredly is the truest philanthropy which exerts itself, not to relieve suffering, but to prevent it;—that

the truest and most high-minded charity which labours assiduously to render its recipients independent of itself. It is not only a false philosophy, but a spurious benevolence, which would blink the difficulties of our social problems—which would slur them over rather than solve them—which would seek for peace in fallacies and compromises whence peace can never spring—which would shrink from the truth because the truth seems to be severe—which would tacitly persuade the poor that they may with impunity violate natural and economic laws, and that they can sow the seeds of improvidence, indolence, and waste, without reaping the appointed harvest of squalid wretchedness and moral degradation—which encourages them to marry without means, because it seems harsh to prohibit or postpone the great solace of life to those who have so few others, “—as if (says Mr. Mill) it were not a thousand times more hard-hearted to tell human beings that they may, than that they may not, call into existence swarms of other creatures, who are sure to be miserable, and most likely to be depraved.” We had proof enough under the Old Poor-law of the immense aggravation of pauperism and degradation caused by our morbid softness and our false philosophy. We have had proof enough since, in Ireland as well as here, that we cannot operate *ab extra*;—we cannot raise the mass out of their misery—they must raise themselves. State interference is omnipotent for evil—very impotent for good; powerful to make and multiply paupers—very powerless to relieve them. Our duty consists in encouraging the exertions of the people, in removing every obstacle, and affording every facility. More than this, in reality, *we cannot do*: and if they are once convinced that this is our doctrine, and that it will be unswervingly applied;—that, while no grievance and no impediment shall remain which legislation can remove, yet

that the state will no longer, in their behalf, stand between the cause and its consequence—will no longer exonerate the poor from the burden of those virtues by which alone in all other classes comfort and respectability can be purchased—we may hope soon to see a mighty change, in a society otherwise so vigorous as ours—a change, the nature and extent of which will amaze those who, from having always let down their net at the wrong side of the boat, have toiled through the night of years, and yet taken nothing.

In dealing with these matters, however, we must again most distinctly and anxiously announce, that we do not urge—we deprecate—any barbarous or indecent haste. All that we are now anxious for is, to superinduce a healthier tone of public feeling on the subject than at present prevails. Let us once arrive at a sound view of things; and, even if we put this view in practice timidly, languidly, tardily, and partially, the “war with evil” is already half accomplished. Let us set and keep our face in the right direction, and the slowness of our progress need then be a matter of comparatively slight regret. We have hitherto erred in our view and our treatment of social maladies, from neglecting to study Nature (by which we mean always the Author of Nature) in her mode of dealing with them. We have been habitually too tender and too hasty. We have wanted nerve, and we have wanted patience. We have forgotten to observe that Nature cures the sins and follies of man by means of the penalties which she attaches to them, as at once their consequence and their corrective. Our tenderness has shrunk from the permission of the penalty—and we have wondered that the cure has not been wrought! Evils, such as those inveterate and deeply-rooted ones that now pervade our social system, cannot be removed without long time and much suffering;—it is, therefore, no argument against a plan of cure

that it works slowly, and works "through much tribulation." Awakened reflection will show that Nature, in working *her* cures, is impatient of no needful slowness, and appalled at no needful suffering: And we must learn our course by watching hers. We must first satisfy ourselves that we are *on the right tack*: and then urge on the process with unshaken nerves, and await the final result with untiring patience and unfaltering trust.

PRINCIPLES OF TAXATION.*

THE English are noted for never doing more than one thing at a time. The national mind does not seem large enough to embrace more than a single interest at once. We attack the enemies of our social well-being in succession, and cut them off in detail. We take up public questions *seriatim*, devoting to each as it arises the whole force of the national will; and resenting as an intruder, or eschewing as a bore, whoever would direct into other, and intrinsically perhaps equally important channels, any portion of the general attention. Upon each grievance to be remedied, and each abuse to be swept away, we concentrate for the moment the whole intensity of our hatred, the whole energy of our zeal: we speak and feel as if it were the sole evil in existence, or, at least, as if all others were utterly insignificant in comparison; and, for the time being, all others are permitted to flourish unchecked and unregarded. This national idiosyncrasy, which is the despair of all whose topics of interest or abhorrence are not those of the present phase of the popular mind, and who find themselves in consequence contemptuously pooh-poohed and set aside, is estimated at its full value by philosophic politicians, who know, not only that

* From the "North British Review."

1. *Taxation and the Funding System*. By J. R. M'CULLOCH. London: 1845.

2. *Principles of Political Economy*. Book V. By J. S. MILL. London: 1850.

3. *Financial Reform Tracts*. Liverpool: 1850-1851.

4. *Bulletin des Lois*. Nos. 300. 303. Paris: 1851.

it is the means of securing far greater efficiency to the operation of the reforming spirit, than it could hope to attain were it frittered away upon a hundred objects, but that it ensures all questions "becoming kings in their turn," and reaping in due time and order the full benefit of this exclusive and predominating zeal. As one battle after another is fought with antiquated error and injustice, as one victory after another, over the forces of the social enemy, is added to the records of national achievements, the subject is relegated to the past, and buried in oblivion for ever, and "the goodly fellowship of our reformers" marches onward to another conquest. Since this career began in Britain we have won the hard-fought fields, *first*, of religious liberty, then of civil freedom and parliamentary reform, and then of commercial emancipation. Each in its turn occupied the nation for years; each was magnified as the sole and special interest of the day; each occupied for a time an inordinate share of the public mind, utterly disproportionate to its real magnitude; and each in turn, when its day was over and its cause was gained, gave place to a successor as unduly and unreasonably favoured. New candidates for popular attention are now coming on the stage. Besides the various questions of the vast field of sociology, three topics especially promise to become prominent, — colonial policy, law reform, and the principles of taxation. Which of these will take precedence, and engross to itself the undivided political spirit of the country, it is hard to say. It may be that, contrary to our wont, we may be able, to a greater or less extent, to entertain the three topics simultaneously, and that while the public mind is acting upon one of them, it may be ripening for action on another. We propose, even at the risk of finding that our voice is as that of one crying in the wilderness, to call attention to the last

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 matters—the science of taxation—as one of
 interest is pressing, perpetual, and yearly
 which comes home, more closely than
 to the business and bosoms of
 us.

The science of taxation may be
 ence. That which has per-
 and sometimes usurped its name,
 of extortion. A certain revenue
 and it was to be got by *hook or by crook*,
 and the easiest way possible. That tax
 yielded the most with the least difficulty to the
 ductors, and the least outcry among the influential
 part of the community, was ever the favourite. “*Plu-
 mer la poule sans la faire crier*,” was the highest aim
 of the chancellors of the exchequer. The certainty of
 distant evils, the dread of collateral consequences, the
 chance of killing the goose that laid the golden eggs,
 were alike disregarded. In earlier times, the coarse
 and ready expedient of a poll-tax, or a hearth-tax, or
 the *primâ facie* fair one of a land-tax, was most usually
 resorted to. In more recent days, as society became
 more complex, and as commerce and manufactures
 were developed, more circuitous and silent, but not
 less unscientific or inequitable modes of transferring
 the property of the subject into the coffers of the state,
 came gradually into vogue. Each new branch of in-
 dustry, as it raised its head, was pounced upon by the
 quick-sighted detectives of the revenue, and made to
 pay for license or protection; each fresh article of taste
 or consumption brought from foreign countries by our
 indefatigable merchants, was burdened with a special
 import duty; funds were sought and extracted from
 the most incongruous and opposite sources,—from the
 necessities of the pauper and the luxuries of the mil-
 lionaire; from the most healthful and the most noxious

indulgences ; from the poison that generates a disease, and from the drug that cures it ; from salt and from eau-de-Cologne ; from tea and from gin ; from rhubarb and from tobacco. No principle of private justice or public advantage was laid down or kept in view ; one sole rule seemed to be followed—whatever was squeezable was to be squeezed ;—*rem, quocunque modo rem*.

This state of things has in a great measure passed away : our legislature has awakened to the necessity of juster and more judicious impositions. But though immense improvement has been effected in the *art* of taxation, next to no progress has taken place in the *science*. We were empirical and tentative in laying on taxes—we continue to be empirical and tentative in taking them off. Statesmen have arisen from time to time who have discovered that such and such a duty was injurious to industry, unproductive to revenue, or was becoming intolerable to the altered feelings of the people ; and it has been repealed accordingly. Sudden emergencies have led to the invention of new imposts, which remain, as a matter of course, till public indignation kicks them off. A deficient revenue is met by a loan, a new tax, or the augmentation of an old one, according to the fancy or ingenuity of the actual chancellor. A surplus revenue occasions the repeal of some branch of revenue, which is selected for sacrifice, not for its mischievousness, but for its unpopularity. But still no step has been taken towards a systematic decision of the general principles which regulate the imposition or the repeal of taxation. The subject, it is true, has been much discussed in the writings of economists, and is often touched upon in parliament ; but the public at large, which in the end settles all these questions, has not yet arrived at any clear comprehension of the question at issue, or any predominating opinion upon it. Writers of authority and statesmen of ability are ranged on

all sides; but it is still a moot point whether taxation ought to be direct or indirect; whether it ought to be levied on all, or only on men of property—on terminable and professional as on perpetual and idle incomes; whether men should pay in proportion to their income or to their expenditure, in proportion to their means or to their requirements; what, in fact, are the qualities and consequences, by reference to which a tax is to be approved or condemned. We propose to contribute our mite towards the formation of a public opinion on this weighty subject, especially upon that branch of it—the controversy between direct and indirect taxation—on which the chief interest is now felt. Before proceeding to this task, however, we wish to notice one or two fallacies, which have still a strong hold on the popular mind, and one or two principles which have been clearly elicited in the course of our irregular and floundering experiments.

It has long been the custom of English demagogues to represent the English people, as not only the most heavily taxed people under the sun, but as actually ground down to the earth by the weight of their burdens, and suffering thereby under a process of gradual and accelerated extinction. It has long been our custom to swallow these representations with implicit credulity, and even to listen to them with a species of savage and insane delight. Yet, nothing can be more certain than that both assertions are not only greatly exaggerated, but utterly untrue. The fact is, that the cuckoo note of the popular agitator has not varied since the beginning of the century, though the circumstances which gave rise to it have been in a state of perpetual alteration, so that what was substantial truth then, is the opposite of truth now. It will astonish most of our readers to be told not only that our taxation, fairly calculated, is lighter than that of several other countries,

but that it has long been steadily and rapidly diminishing. We are no optimists; we are far from imagining that our public burdens are not deplorably heavy; we are far from believing that a wiser course in former days might not have enormously lessened them; we are far from despairing of a great mitigation of them, by a judicious course in future;—but we protest against the childish and untruthful habit, so dear to the grumbling temper of our countrymen, of perpetually representing ourselves as the most ill-used and trampled-upon of mortals. We presume it will be allowed on all hands that the burden of taxation must be reckoned, not by the gross amount paid into the national treasury, but by that amount *compared with the wealth and the numbers of the nation*. Looking at the matter from this comparative point of view, we find that in 1801 the population of the United Kingdom was 15,800,000, and the revenue paid into the exchequer (exclusive, of course, of loans) was 34,113,000*l.*, giving an average of 43*s.* a head. In 1815, the last year of the war, the population was 19,000,000, and the revenue 72,210,000*l.*; but as twenty per cent. must be allowed for the depreciation of the currency, the average will be found to have risen to 60*s.* a head. In 1821, after five years of peace, the population was 21,200,000, and the revenue 55,800,000*l.*, or 51*s.* a head. In 1850 the population was 27,000,000, and the revenue 52,300,000*l.*, or 39*s.* a head. That is, the pressure of taxation upon each Briton is actually less by *one-tenth* than it was fifty years ago; less by *one-fifth* than it was thirty years ago; and less by *one-third* than it was during our Buonapartean wars.

But this is not all. Taxation must be estimated not according to numbers only, but according to wealth also—and indeed chiefly—since it is our wealth that gives us the power of meeting it. An equal amount of

taxation is obviously only half the burden, *ceteris paribus*, to a man of a thousand a year, which it is to one of five hundred a year. Now, we have no means of ascertaining with *precision* the increase of national wealth (*i. e.*, capability of enduring taxation) since the beginning of the century, but there are on record a few significant facts*, which suffice to show that it has been certainly much greater than the increase of population. The *real property* of Great Britain was valued in 1803 at 967,284,000*l.*, and in 1842 at 1,820,000,000*l.* The total amount of incomes (as assessed) derived from trades and professions was in 1812, 21,247,600*l.*, and in 1848, 56,990,000*l.*, being nearly a *threefold* increase in thirty-six years. The amount of capital subject to legacy duty sprung up from 4,122,000*l.* in 1800, to 16,622,000*l.* in 1812, and to 44,348,000*l.* in 1845, or a *tenfold* increase in the half century. The sums insured against fire were 232,000,000*l.* in 1801, and 722,000,000*l.* in 1845. We think we shall be within the mark, if we assume that the wealth of the country has increased threefold since the beginning of the century, while the taxation has increased in the same period only from thirty-four to fifty-two millions; or in round numbers, the one has increased at the rate of 200 per cent., and the other only at the rate of fifty per cent. Mr. Norman, whose authority few will be inclined to dispute, after a careful examination of the whole question, and an ample allowance for the change in the value of money, sums up as follows:—"The reader will recollect that it has been shown, supposing the increase of wealth to have kept pace with that of the population, that a diminution of pressure arising from public burdens has taken place since the peace to

* See Porter's *Progress of the Nation*. Norman on Taxation.

the extent of 53 per cent. ; but on reading the foregoing observations, he will probably be of opinion that the reduction thus exhibited falls far short of the real truth. By how much short, can only be a matter of conjecture. If we say that the real reduction has been 67 per cent., or two-thirds, we shall probably be still too low ; and, taking all things into calculation, it seems probable that we shall not be far wrong in fixing it at 75 per cent., or three-fourths. In other words, it may be assumed on highly probable grounds, that an individual with a given income, who in taxes and loans paid 100*l.* to the state in 1815, would now pay only 25*l.*"

If the public burdens of England are greatly diminished and diminishing, when compared with her wealth, which affords the only fair criterion of their severity, it is equally certain that they are not, when estimated by the same standard, so heavy in comparison with those of other European countries as it is usual to represent them. In England, it is true, the taxation amounts to 39*s.* a head, against 29*s.* 7*d.* in France ; 37*s.* 3*d.* in Holland ; 21*s.* 8*d.* in Belgium ; and 20*s.* in Spain. In France, indeed, it has recently reached 33*s.*, and in the first year of the Revolution was 40*s.* a head. But will any one pretend that the wealth of England does not exceed the wealth of every one of these countries in a far greater ratio than her taxation ? Is not England more than twice as rich as Spain ?—is she not probably ten times as rich ? Is she not more than one-fifteenth richer than Holland ?—not more than one-fourth richer than France ? With regard to the latter country, Mr. Norman calculates, from premises " which give his conclusions the force of moral demonstration, that the per centage of the national wealth abstracted for state purposes, is more than double what it is in England. In other words, that a Frenchman pays out of his income or fortune, more than twice as much as is paid by

an Englishman who may possess a similar income or fortune.”

But the case of the United States of America is generally cast in our teeth as a specimen of the light taxation of a country where the people govern themselves. Let us inquire into the facts of the case, before sitting down quietly under the reproach. Let us ascertain the *state* taxes, and the local taxes, as well as the national or federal taxes, which commonly are alone taken into consideration by popular haranguers.

We find that in Great Britain, in the year ending January 5th, 1850,—

The total state expenditure was -	-	£55,500,000
The Poor Rates -	-	- 7,250,000
The Local and County Rates -	-	- 4,000,000
Total -	-	<u>£66,750,000</u>

Now, as the population was twenty-seven millions, this would give nearly 50s. a head. But the real property in Great Britain now assessed to the income-tax, amounts to 2,382,000,000l.*; and this exempts not only all estates whose income falls below 150l. a year, but the whole of Ireland. The personal property, as gathered from the Legacy Duty returns, is about 2,118,000,000l., making a total of realised property of 4,500,000,000l. Now sixty-six millions is equal to a tax of 1·46 per cent. upon this sum.

In the United States, the *national* expenditure, as stated in the last Report of the Secretary of the Treasury, averaged forty millions of dollars during the last six years.† The population is now 23,674,000;

* See Johnston's N. America, vol. ii. p. 251., from which this comparison is taken.

† Three of these were years of war (with Mexico), and three were years of peace. They afford, therefore, a fair comparison with this country, of whose expenditure one half goes to defray the interest of war loans.

but during the average of the six years, it may be taken at 22,000,000. The *national* taxes, therefore, amount to about 7s. 8d. a head. In the state of New York, according to Mr. Johnston, the state and local taxes amount to two dollars, or 8s. 4d. a head. The total taxation may therefore be taken at 16s. *Man* for *man*, therefore, it is clear that the Englishman is taxed three times as heavily as the American. But what is the case when we come to estimate the relative wealth of the two countries? We may take the *national* taxes paid in the state of New York (chiefly derived from custom duties) at four millions of dollars in the last six years.* The state, county, and township taxes were 5,500,000, making a total of 9,500,000, on a valuation of 666,000,000 of dollars of realised property. Great Britain, therefore, with realised property valued at four thousand five hundred millions of pounds, endures public burdens to the extent of sixty-six millions, or 1·46 per cent. The state of New York, with real property valued at six hundred and sixty-six millions of dollars, is burdened to the extent of nine millions and a half, or about 1·42 per cent.†

If, then, our taxation, fairly estimated, is not as heavy as is commonly alleged, neither is it levied as inequitably as we are accustomed to hear it represented. It is not *true*, as it is so habitually asserted, that it falls chiefly or disproportionately on the poor. Here, as elsewhere, we are satisfied with the careless and most unconscientious repetition of an ancestral war-cry. We are using language which was, to a great extent, true at the be-

* It is true that Mr. Johnston takes these at 3,000,000 of dollars, but his estimate of the total national taxes is taken at 30,000,000 of dollars, which is 10,000,000 less than it has recently been.

† A certain amount of every man's property is, we believe, exempted in America, which may be set off against our exemptions under 150*l*.

ginning of the century, during the war, and before the Reform Bill, but which is simply and culpably false now. Almost every year during the last twenty, has witnessed the relief of the unpropertied classes of the community from some fiscal burden. The tendency now is, in our opinion, even to exempt them unwisely and unfairly. Incomes under 150*l.* are exempted from the income-tax; houses under 20*l.* are exempted from the house-tax. That is to say, six-sevenths of all dwellings, and nine-tenths of all incomes in the country, are allowed to escape from direct taxation altogether. Between 1830 and 1850, 21,568,000*l.* of taxes have been repealed, and 7,925,000*l.* have been imposed. But those that have been repealed were almost exclusively taxes which pressed upon the masses; and those which have been imposed (*in order to render the repeal of the others possible*) are taxes which are paid almost exclusively by men of property. Of the 7,925,000*l.*, 5,500,000*l.* are raised by the income-tax alone. All taxes have been removed from the raw materials of that industry which employs the poor. All taxes have been removed from those necessities of life which feed the poor. Corn comes in free; butchers' meat comes in free. Two taxes only exist of which the poor man cannot avoid paying his share—the excise on soap, and the duty on timber. But the duty on timber only raises the *cost of erection* of the poor man's house 4*s.* 3*d.**, and *his yearly rent*, therefore, only by about 3½*d.* The excise on soap varies from 1*d.* to 1½*d.* a pound; and on the consumption of a poor man's family

* The quantity of timber used in the construction of a cottage, costing about 100*l.*, is 212 cubic feet. The duty on American pine (the sort used for such houses) is 1*s.* a load of 50 feet. The duty, therefore, adds 4*s.* 3*d.* to the original cost of the cottage. If Baltic timber were used (the duty being 3*s.* 9*d.*), the addition would be 15*s.* 10*d.*

will amount to about 4s. 6d. a year.* These are literally the sole taxes which, in this country, are not *optional* with the poor man. Except in these items†, no poor man need pay one farthing to the revenue unless he please. But the rich man cannot so escape. The poor man may say, as Benjamin Franklin said, and as hundreds of wise and good men have done,—“Spirits are poison: I will not use them. Tobacco is nasty: I will renounce it. Sugar and tea are needless: I will dispense with them;” and he slips through life almost as untaxed as the Red Indian. But the upper and middle classes might renounce all these noxious and superfluous luxuries in vain; they would still have to pay 18,000,000*l.* into the national, and 11,000,000*l.* into the local, exchequer. In no other country, and on no other system of taxation, could the working classes escape so easily, or pay so little.

But we shall be told that this is not a fair way of looking at the matter; that sugar, and tea, and beer, are now rather necessities than luxuries, and that, whether they are so or not, the poor man has as much right to his luxuries as the rich. Unquestionably he has: we would be the last to grudge them to him. But we cannot think that he has a right to them *untaxed* any more than the rich man. Benevolence, and perhaps justice, seems to prompt that, as far as may be, our revenue should be levied on a man's superfluity, not upon that portion of his means which is essential to

* The average consumption of soap per family, in that rank, as we have taken pains to ascertain, is less than 1 lb. a week. This is confirmed by M'Culloch (“Account of British Empire,” vol. ii. p. 396.). See also Porter (“Progress of Nation,” vol. iii. p. 76.). The quantity of soap consumed in the United Kingdom in 1849, was 186,000,000 lbs., or 6·75 lbs. a head, which, at five persons to a family, would give 37 lbs. a year; and this, at 1½*d.* a lb. duty, would amount to 4s. 7*d.*

† Perhaps we ought also to except the advertisement duty.

subsistence. But if a man *has* a superfluity, and spends that superfluity on sugar, which is pleasant to him, on beer, which is needless to him, on spirits or tobacco, which are mischievous to him, by that act and that possession he ceases to be a poor man, and voluntarily steps into the tax-paying class. If he has a surplus to expend in luxury, he is no longer entitled to sue in *formâ pauperis*; he ceases to be an object of charity or of exemption. If he drinks his gallon of spirits, or smokes his pound of tobacco, why should he not pay on that gallon or that pound as much as the rich man would do? If the rich man indulges, as he is able to indulge, in a double quantity, he pays a double tax. There can be no *inequity* in this.

But, as a matter of fact, *is* an unfair proportion, even of taxes on the consumption of luxuries, paid by the working classes? Do they, on the whole, contribute to the revenue at all more than, regard being had to their number, they ought to do? Let us look a little into detail. It is impossible to ascertain with accuracy what proportion the propertied classes in this country bear to the labouring classes, or *prolétaires*, as they are called among our neighbours, or how far the distinction between the two is a valid one; for there are comparatively few among the rich who do not work, and increasingly few among the poor who possess no property of any kind. But, from several indications*, there is

* We will put down here a few of those known facts from which we have felt ourselves warranted in drawing the inferences in the text. We are aware that these inferences can scarcely reach beyond highly probable conjectures, but we are desirous that our readers should not imagine them to be mere random *guesses*.

1. The number of registered electors in the United Kingdom was, in 1850, by official returns, 1,050,187. Now, it is probable that the number of non-electors in the propertied classes would be about balanced by the number of electors among the *prolétaires*. If we suppose all, or nearly all, of these to be heads of families (or those

reason to believe that we shall not be wide of the mark if we reckon the former at one-fourth and the latter at three-fourths of the community. There are certain items in the customs and excise duties which we know are paid wholly by the rich. There are other items of which the rich consume, and on which, therefore, they pay, far more per head than the poor: such are tea, sugar, and coffee. Now, an examination into the detail of the expenditure of different families in various grades

who are not to be equal in number to the women, *not registered*, who are), this would give a total population of the propertied classes (at five to a family) of 5,250,000.

2. By the census of 1841 we got returns of the occupations of 7,850,000 persons in Great Britain, out of a total of 18,850,000. Of these, 760,000 (or those who are returned as independent, educated persons following miscellaneous pursuits, professional men, government civil servants, local, church, and law officers) clearly belonged to the middle and upper ranks. Of the remaining 7,090,000 (consisting of those employed in commerce, agriculture, army and navy, domestic servants, common labourers, &c.), we cannot be wrong in supposing that naval and military officers, farmers, master manufacturers, merchants, clerks, and shopkeepers, would amount to at least 1,000,000. This would give in all 1,760,000, out of 7,850,000, as belonging to classes above the condition of day labourers and *pro-létaires*, or nearly one-fourth.

3. The class of domestic servants reached 1,135,612 in 1831, and in 1841 had increased to 1,691,679. We shall not, therefore, exceed the mark if we take their numbers now at 2,000,000. These are, of course, entirely confined to families of the upper and middle ranks; and *the whole of the indirect taxes levied on their consumption of taxed articles is paid by those ranks*. The propertied classes pay not only on their own consumption, which is much larger per head than that in the lower ranks, but *on the consumption of two millions of the lower classes besides*.

Once for all, be it observed, we give these estimates, and others that follow, merely *for what they are worth*. They are carefully made; but we know from long use in statistical calculations how liable such are to error, and we therefore give our readers not only the results but the data on which we base them, so that they may judge for themselves.

on these articles, leads us to believe that three-fourths of the tea and coffee that pay duty, and two thirds of the sugar, are consumed in the houses of the propertied classes. This is the result of careful and extensive private inquiries. Among the agricultural poor, the *men* scarcely ever touch either tea or coffee, and we have ascertained, from personal inquiry, that the quantities purchased by the women for their own drinking are excessively small. Among the artisan population the consumption is much greater. But in the case of the rich and easy classes, not only is the consumption great individually, but they pay for the consumption of their servants. Now, the annual consumption of tea in Great Britain is, per head of the whole population, 23 oz. The consumption of families in the upper classes, where there are three or four servants, is 8 lbs., or 128 oz. per head. The usual allowance to servants is 6 lbs., or 96 oz. per head, just four times that of the average. In the case of sugar the average annual consumption throughout the country is 24 lbs. per head. But the male agricultural population use scarcely any, while the usual consumption of the shop-keeping and higher artisan class is 26 lbs.; that of the middle class 50 lbs.; that of the higher 70 lbs. per head. Now, let us construct an approximate table on these data, admitting freely that they are scarcely more than careful and conjectural estimates.

Total Produce of the Ordinary Revenue levied in 1849.

Customs	-	-	-	-	- £22,268,864
Excise	-	-	-	-	- 15,003,098
Stamps	-	-	-	-	- 7,013,267
Taxes	-	-	-	-	- 4,522,910
Income Tax	-	-	-	-	- 5,564,833
Post-Office, (Net)	-	-	-	-	- 832,000
Carry over	-	-	-	-	- £55,204,972

Brought over	-	-	-	£55,204,972
Poor-Rate, England,	£5,395,000			
„ Scotland,	501,000			
„ Ireland,	1,359,000			
	<u>£7,255,000</u>			
County-Rate, England,	1,317,000			
„ Ireland,	928,000			
Highway, England,	1,698,000			
Constabulary, Ireland,	34,000			
	<u>3,977,000</u>			
			<u>11,232,000</u>	
				<u>£66,436,972</u>

Paid by the Propertied Classes entirely.

Poor-Rates and County Rates,	£11,232,000
Income-Tax, and Assessed Taxes,	10,087,743
Stamps, (except Advertisements and Licenses,) - - - - -	6,660,000
Customs Duties on Books -	£7,748
„ Embroidery -	12,301
„ Flowers -	13,058
„ Lace -	7,943
„ Plate -	1,360
„ Eau-de-Cologne -	2,084
„ Brandy -	1,639,464
„ Wine -	1,767,558
	<u>3,451,516</u>

Paid by the Propertied Classes in Part.

$\frac{3}{4}$ ths { Tea - - -	4,471,420	
$\frac{3}{4}$ ths { Coffee - - -	642,520	
$\frac{3}{4}$ ths { Oranges - - -	64,680	3,883,965
$\frac{2}{3}$ ds Sugar - - -	4,126,500	2,751,000
$\frac{2}{3}$ ths Post-Office - - -	832,000	693,334
		<u>£38,759,558</u>
$\frac{1}{4}$ th { Of the remaining Customs, Stamps, and Excise, say—	6,884,687	
$\frac{1}{4}$ th { £27,538,748 - - -		<u>45,644,245</u>
		<u>£20,792,727</u>

In round numbers, that is, the comparatively few people of property pay *two and a half times* as much taxation as the comparatively many *prolétaires*. The working classes, who constitute three-fourths of the community, pay twenty millions, while the propertied, or upper and middle classes, who amount only to one-fourth, pay forty-four millions,—or, as our total population is about twenty-eight millions, the former pay not quite 1*l.* a head, while the latter pay 6*l.* 10*s.* 6*d.*, or *six and a half times* as much. This scarcely sounds like the inequity complained of.

The working classes then clearly pay far less in proportion to their *numbers* than the higher and middle ranks: do they not pay less also in proportion to their *incomes*? Here, again, we are thrown back upon the region of plausible conjecture; for we are without the data to enable us to ascertain accurately the relative incomes of the different ranks. A few considerations, however, may serve to show that the above question is not so irrational as it may at first appear.

1. The incomes of those who have more than 150*l.* a year appear by the income-tax returns to amount in Great Britain to 185,000,000*l.*

2. The number of domestic servants in Great Britain (excluding Ireland, as in the last case) is above 1,400,000, and their incomes, male and female (including keep, or board wages), cannot be less than 35*l.* each (Porter, vol. iii. p. 16.), or above 50,000,000*l.*,—the sum yielded by Schedule D. Their money wages alone will be about 13*l.* a head.

3. The population of Great Britain (in all these calculations we are obliged to leave Ireland aside) is now twenty-one millions, of whom the working classes, according to our previous data, will form about fifteen millions and three quarters. Deducting from these the domestic servants, there will be left above fourteen

millions and a quarter, or about three millions of *families*. Now, what is the income of these families on an *average*, taking into account all the trades and occupations into which they are divided,—agricultural labourers, artisans, mechanics, factory hands, journeymen tailors, shoemakers, engine-drivers, &c. &c. ? From the Official Report on the employment of women and children in agriculture, it appears that the actual earnings of a *family* of peasants are much greater even in the worst paid districts than it is usual to represent them. The lowest seems to be 10s. a week, and they often exceed 20s. or 25s.* It is difficult, after reading that report, to believe that 13s. a week is not rather below than above the yearly average. In the manufacturing districts, many single artisans earn double this sum—women and children often more than half—many *families* three or four times as much. Handloom weavers, no doubt, are below this; journeymen tailors, shoemakers, and other handicraftsmen generally much above; mechanics, and engine-men, colliers, men employed in iron works, greatly above. On the whole, we believe we shall be below the mark in taking the average earnings of a family at 20s. a week, or say, 50l. a year. But, as we are aware that at first sight our calculations will appear extreme to many, whose opinions have been formed from speeches and writings of popular or party controversialists, and as we wish to be always within the mark, we will, at the suggestion of the first statistical authority in England, take 40l. instead of 50l. as the average. This, for three millions of families, would give 120,000,000l., to which we must add 20,000,000l. for the mere wages of the class of domestic servants. (We take their *wages* only, not their *main-*

* Those who are startled by a statement so much at variance with their preconceived impressions, will find our view fully borne out by the careful investigations of the Official Commissioners referred to.

tenance, because the taxation on the articles they consume is paid by their masters, and our present object is simply a comparison between the *tax-paying* income of the several classes.) We thus arrive at 140,000,000*l.* as the aggregate income of the working classes of Great Britain.

4. The income of the class who are above the working classes, and yet below 150*l.* a year, we can only guess at. Probably we shall not be far wrong if we take it at 50,000,000*l.* This we must add to the 185,000,000*l.*, the income of those who have more than 150*l.* a year. This gives a total income for the middle and upper classes of 235,000,000*l.*

5. But we have just seen that the working classes pay only (leaving Ireland, as before, wholly aside, and supposing no class there to contribute anything) 20,000,000*l.* out of a revenue of 66,000,000*l.* Now 20,000,000*l.* of taxes on an income of 140,000,000*l.*, is about 14 per cent. But 45,000,000*l.* (the amount paid, as we have seen, by the propertied classes) on an income of 235,000,000*l.*, is not 14 per cent., but nearly 20.

In the course of our empirical proceedings in fiscal matters, though nothing like system or science has yet been developed, our experience has brought about the recognition of two or three important truths. Of these the most valuable are the connection between a flourishing revenue and a cheap and abundant supply of the necessities of life, and the superior productiveness of moderate over high duties. The almost invariable concomitance between a low price of corn, and an increased consumption of exciseable articles, not only directed public attention to the discovery, that the one is a logical sequence of the other, but enabled even Chancellors of the Exchequer to draw the conclusion, that as food and clothing must in the expenditure of all classes take precedence of any other articles of consumption, it

is only on the surplus, after these are supplied, that the state can effectively levy its demands. Hence we may hope that it will henceforth be one of the principal objects of all governments to keep provisions cheap, and that even in our times of most pressing emergency, we shall never again see any proposal for imposing taxes upon food or other articles of first necessity.—The many remarkable instances, also, which our financial history affords of a rapid rise in the revenue, arising from duties on articles of general consumption, following upon a great reduction of those duties, have fairly established the theory, and are fast entailing the practice, of moderate rates. The operation of a reduction of duty is twofold: it increases the consumption of the taxed article, in consequence of the reduced price bringing it within the reach of a larger number of consumers, and enabling former consumers to purchase more abundantly than before; and it causes a larger proportion of what is consumed to contribute to the revenue, by removing or lessening the motive to illicit importation or production. The various fluctuations in the tax on sugar, on coffee, on tea, on wine, on spirits, and on letters, and their immediate and invariable consequences, which have been so often brought before the public, have raised the enriching tendency of reduced duties so nearly to the rank of an axiom of financial policy, that scarcely any one except a Chancellor of the Exchequer would hesitate to act upon it. The same history, however, which has taught us this prolific truth, has brought to light two exceptions, which are sometimes pointed to by financiers of little faith, as invalidating the general law. The usual result does not ensue when the article is not one of general consumption, but a mere luxury or fancy of the few. Thus, no reduction in the tax on hair-powder or four-wheeled carriages would so increase the use of either as

to compensate for the change. Neither does the usual result ensue where the reduction is inadequate to the purpose, and neither materially reduces the price to the consumer of the duty-paid article, nor greatly diminishes the temptation to smuggling. It is obvious, that where the duty on an article of moderate bulk, and in great demand, is 800 per cent., the reduction of this to 600 per cent. would only reduce the price to the consumer, and consequently affect the consumption to an inappreciable extent, and thus the revenue would probably lose the whole amount of the reduction. It is obvious, also, that the *smallest* of these duties would still leave the stimulus to smuggling so enormous as to ensure its continuance to the utmost practicable extent. The reduction would leave the disadvantage of the fair trader virtually untouched. The experience of the items of tea and tobacco have well illustrated both these principles,—the duty on the former being about 200, and on the latter about 700 per cent.

These two practical facts form, however, pretty much the sum total of financial wisdom, on which all parties may be said to be agreed. Nearly every other rule is *adhuc sub judice*. Even our first authorities on these matters, Adam Smith, Ricardo, M'Culloch, and Mill, are by no means always in harmony; and if they were, our senators and statesmen are far from having studied them, or imbibed their principles. A new school, and a very active one, has now sprung up in Liverpool, and its votaries have formed themselves into an association for the avowed purpose of advocating direct taxation, as the only sound, innoxious, and equitable system. We shall not attempt to enter into any abstract disquisitions on the knottier branches of the subject, but shall endeavour to elucidate a few general propositions which may naturally aid us in gaining a clear conception of its larger bearings.

is only on the supply of necessities that can be predicated of a state can effectively suppress the evil — would be one hope that it will be so for every individual in the objects of all government. It should super no industry and that even in our time it should offer no temptation shall never again be a tax which should be levied upon food or clothing, and should cause no irritation, but should many remarkable things be done consciously, or at least un- history affords examples which should take no more from the from duties of the state than the exchequer. But such a ing upon a state is obviously unattainable; and established a system of taxation must be content to adopt such practices as are most proximate to the fulfilment of tion of the state, and the most important of them. It the tax should fairly face the inevitable dilemma. bring a tax to be raised. Taxation, therefore, const it is a necessary evil. But all taxes are objectionable. mor it is not possible to believe, to name a single impost pro it is more or less strong might not be rev it is a tax diminishes the wealth of the in it is a tax every one is unproductively expended. in it is a tax we have ever heard of is either inequitable s) it is a tax that either retards commerce, or stimulates to a) it is a tax that is costly in the collection, or is irritating to b) it is a tax that combines several or all of these objec-

What is left to us is a choice of evils. It is reason, therefore, for rejecting or repealing a tax, if it is open to one or more of the above charges. On the other hand, is it any valid ground for imposing a tax, that it fulfils one of the above requirements, if it violates others equally or more? It is no conclusive recommendation of a tax, that it is equitable, if it be intolerably irritating or impoverishing. It is no adequate defence of a tax, that it is cheap and palatable, if it be at the same time demoralising. We must not judge taxes by a

of ideal perfection, which none of them can but by the degree in which they *approach* to the *essential* requirements of that standard.

Thus now dive at once into the heart of the matter, consider the chief recommendations alleged in favour of system of *direct taxation*. "Direct taxation, we are told, is the most *equitable* of all systems. Under the existing mode the poor pay more, and the rich less, than their fair share. Under direct taxation this injustice would be remedied." — Under what system of direct taxation would the adjustment be equitable? and what is a "fair share?" *What is equity?* — Simple equity — the dictates of rigid justice, would seem to require that men should pay to the state in proportion to the services it renders them, — those who benefit most paying most. Now the class which derives the greatest benefit from the protection of the state is clearly that which would suffer most from the withdrawal of that protection, viz. the ignorant, the feeble, and the helpless. The class which profits most by the active beneficence of the state (when its functions are not merely negative and protective) is clearly the same, viz. the poor, the weak, and the incapable. Simple equity, therefore, would appear to require that those should pay the largest amount of **taxation** who are least able to pay — a conclusion which, however strictly deducible from admitted premises, it is **alike impossible** to adopt or carry out. — Other lovers of equity contend that, as every man has life and liberty to be guaranteed, but every man has not property, — a **poll-tax** should be levied as an equivalent to the former, and that the rest of the revenue should be raised on **property**, and according to property. There is a certain shallow plausibility in the distinction which will recommend it to many minds. But a single question will show how **unequitable** and unsatisfactory is the solution it affords. — **How are you to estimate the relative value of**

life, liberty, and property, so as to decide *what proportion* of the revenue shall be raised by a poll-tax, and what by a property tax? According to general feeling the latter would be infinitesimally small. "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." Again, is every man to pay the same amount of poll-tax? — the man to whom life is sweet and valuable, with every charm which health, happiness, and affection can shed around it, — and the man to whom it is a burden and a malady. Others urge that the relation between the state and its citizens is too wide and too sacred to be thus treated as a bare contract for protection on the one side, and payment on the other; that it is the key-stone of a union in which all have entered with a view to the general good; and that every man should contribute, not in proportion to his needs, but in proportion to his means. But — practical difficulties apart — on what principle are a man's means to be estimated? By "means," do we intend to signify his property or income, or *his ability to pay*? Is he to be taxed according to what he *has*, or according to what he can *afford*? If the latter — which clearly ought to be the reply — how, by the resources of direct taxation, is it possible to ascertain it? If the former, as is contended by the parties whose arguments we are considering, what rule could be more *inequitable*? For, of three men with 1000*l.* a year each, it is as certain that their *incomes* are equal, as that their *means* are unequal. The income of the first is derived from fixed property, and is permanent and bequeathable, and he may spend the whole. The income of the second is a life annuity, and he can only venture to spend what remains after he has purchased an insurance policy for his surviving family. The income of the third is derived from severe professional exertions which cannot be continued for ever, and he can only spend what remains after the additional

purchase of a deferred annuity as a provision for old age. Are all these men to be taxed equally, on the plea that their incomes are equal? If so, your equitable plan leads to the commission of a manifest injustice; for it is clear that a man can only afford to pay in proportion to what he can afford to spend; and though you levy the same amount of tax on each of the three men, the *pressure* of that tax will be very different. We will assume, however, that this objection is met, as many political economists contend that it should, by taxing permanent, terminable, and professional incomes by a varying scale. Still other difficulties as insuperable in the way of a really fair assessment remain behind. How will you deal with the case of men who, with equal fixed incomes, have most unequal demands upon those incomes, and therefore in truth most unequal means? It is abundantly clear that a man having 1000*l.* a year, and ten children, cannot afford to pay as much as a man having 1000*l.* a year, and neither wife nor child. A tax of 10 per cent., which would be scarcely felt by the latter, or, at the worst, would only debar him from some noxious or needless luxury, would actually *pinch* the former, perhaps drive him into a smaller house, and probably compel him to stint his family in clothes or education.

In order in some measure to meet this objection, Bentham recommended, and Mr. J. S. Mill endorses the recommendation, that taxation should only be levied on a man's *surplus* income, *i. e.* on that portion of it which remains after the absolute necessities of life are provided for. In pursuance of this idea, he advises that all incomes under 50*l.* should be exempted altogether, that a man with 100*l.* should pay upon 50*l.* only, and a man with 1000*l.* upon 950*l.*, and so on. We see no objection to the proposal as a practical boon; but it is obvious that this could afford only a very rough ap-

proximation to justice: 50*l.* a year would more than supply a bachelor with food, shelter, and clothing, but would be inadequate for a man with ten children. Moreover, it would leave the real difficulty untouched — which is to provide an income-tax which shall be truly and not nominally equitable—which *shall not press on one man more heavily than on another?* We are not here arguing, be it observed, against an income-tax as inadmissible; we merely wish to show that it does not, any more than those taxes which it is proposed to discard in its favour, fulfil the requirements of equity. It does not make, and cannot be arranged to make, every man pay his “fair share” towards the burdens of the state.

There is little doubt that many of the objections to the existing income-tax might be removed or mitigated, but several we believe to be inherent in its essence. At present it combines nearly every possible bad quality that a tax can have. It is only half as productive as it might be made; it is inquisitorial and irritating to the last degree; it is brimful of obvious and hidden injustices, and it offers overwhelming inducements to fraud. It is impossible to point to any principle on which the exemption of all incomes under 150*l.* can be defended. If the propriety (above stated) of leaving untaxed a sufficient portion of a man's income to provide him with an actual subsistence be urged on its behalf, then we reply that the exemption is far too wide, and should have been confined to incomes under 50*l.* If the plea be brought forward that the class whose incomes fall between 50*l.* and 150*l.* bear an inordinate proportion of the indirect taxes, as is suggested by Mr. Mill, then we reply that the exemption does not extend nearly far enough, for the people whose income ranges from 100*l.* to 300*l.* are far the most heavily taxed portion of the community. They pay house-tax, they pay poor-rates

and county-rates, they pay a considerable portion of the stamp duties and the advertisement duty, and they contribute fully more than their share to the customs and excise. Moreover, the exemption reduces the yield of the tax, according to the best opinions, fully one half. Finally, as the recent parliamentary investigation is said to prove beyond question, it opens a wider door to petty fraud than any other provision of this baneful impost.* Those acquainted with the practical working of special taxes declare, that if there be one rule which their experience points to as admitting of less doubt and fewer exceptions than any other, it is, that *all exemptions are mischievous*.

Even if all the obvious and admitted inequalities of the income-tax were rectified, it would still be in practice the most unfair of all imposts, from the utter impossibility of assessing with any certainty the actual incomes of the contributors. Rents, salaries, annuities, dividends, &c., may be accurately ascertained; but professional gains, and the profits of trade, can be estimated on no other ground than the declarations of the contributors themselves. No productions of books, no demand for minute and detailed returns, though these are often called for to a most vexatious and troublesome extent, can enable the collectors to prevent fraud where fraud is intended. Not only therefore does the tax fall heaviest on the most conscientious — the worst species of inequality — but an almost irresistible temptation is held out to subtle casuistry, to self-favouring decisions in all cases where the shadow of a doubt exists, to all those petty tamperings with integrity which gradually scar the tenderness of the moral sense, and pave the way

* In 1844 the claims for exemption were 82,854, of which the commissioners were obliged to admit 75,500. The amount returned on these claims was 69,100*l*.

for bolder and larger infractions of justice and of law.* The surveyors and commissioners feel themselves baffled by the deliberate and consistent assertions of the steady knave, and they repay themselves by subjecting the honest tradesman to an amount of vexatious and insulting cross-examination which amounts to absolute persecution. They openly charge him with having made a false declaration — the law gives them power to do this with impunity; they remand him day after day for fresh examination; they require returns of details and particular transactions for three years back, which it is sometimes impossible to furnish, which waste his time and sour his temper: when he either cannot or will not do this, or when, wearied out with contumely and annoyance, he abandons the contest in disgust, they confirm the surcharge which brands him as a would-be but baffled deceiver: and if, from a dread of meeting similar insolence and torture every year, or from feeling that no

* Defrauding the revenue is too commonly regarded as scarcely a moral offence at all. Thousands will cheat the exchequer who would on no account cheat a fellow subject; and the conduct of the government in upholding, and the language of Sir Charles Wood in defending, a tax so replete with manifold injustices as the existing income-tax, have done much to promote this misty, oblique, and exceptional morality. We scarcely know any didactic and professorial teachings as to the veniality of fraud to be compared with the speeches of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on this subject. He has repeatedly argued that the income-tax is just because it is unjust to all—that it is so rotten and indefensible in all its details that you cannot meddle with it without risk of its falling to pieces altogether, that he must have the money, that he is cheated more than he cheats, &c. &c. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer declares that he cannot help being unjust, the tax-payer will naturally reply that he cannot help being dishonest. If the chancellor pleads, in defence of an unfair tax, that he must fill his coffers, the subject will reply that he must protect his purse. It becomes a simple battle between extortion on one side and evasion on the other.

mere sum of money can make it worth while to submit again to such an irritating process, he consents to compound at the amount thus unjustly assessed, they point to his consent as an acknowledgment of his intended fraud. These cases are deplorably frequent; we speak from long and painful experience, and our own observation has been confirmed by some of the commissioners themselves, who blushed at the amount of bullying and insult inflicted by their colleagues on the unfortunate appellants. Now, a tax which enables the fraudulent to cheat the collector, and the collector to rob the honest, can be rendered endurable and defensible by no amount of supposed theoretical perfection. A tax, too, which leads to so much irritation of temper, and so much bitter indignation, that many of those who pay it would willingly contribute, in order to escape from it, double the amount in any other form, is surely open to one of the most fatal objections that can be alleged against any impost. Of the five requirements enumerated above, as characteristic of a perfect tax, a direct tax on income fulfils scarcely one. It is peculiarly and incurably unfair, it is excessively irritating, it is lamentably demoralising, and, if all things be taken into consideration, it is by no means unexpensive in the collection. Mr. Mill, even, "with much regret," considers the first of these objections as insuperable. "It is to be feared," he adds, "that the fairness which belongs to the principle of an income-tax can never be made to attach to it in practice; and that this tax, while apparently the most just of all modes of raising a revenue, is in effect more unjust than many others which are *primâ facie* more objectionable. This consideration would lead us to concur in the opinion which, until of late, has usually prevailed — that direct taxes upon income should be reserved as an extraordinary resource for great national emergencies, in which

the necessity of a large additional revenue overrules all minor considerations.”*

The argument in favour of direct taxes on property and income, which has so often been alleged of late,—viz. that they fall upon the rich rather than on the poor,—we have already partially considered. We have shown that it is at least questionable whether, in simple equity, the poor *ought* to be so largely exempted from taxation. We have shown good ground for believing that the poor, in this country and under our existing system, pay less than the rich in proportion to their incomes, and enormously less in proportion to their numbers. We have also shown that the working classes with us are relieved from all taxation but that which is *self-imposed*, to an extent which can be affirmed of no other country in the world. We have shown that our revenue may be said, without exaggeration, to be almost wholly levied *either upon property*, and chiefly upon the larger properties, *or upon luxuries*. But on this branch of the question, there is one other very important consideration to be adverted to. Direct taxes are now popular with the masses and their writers, *only because the masses are exempted from them*. Now, were we to decide upon raising our revenue wholly or mainly from direct taxes, this exemption could no longer be maintained. A large amount of taxation can

* “The truth is that a fair income-tax is a desideratum which is not destined ever to be supplied. After the legislature has done all that can be done to make it equal, it will still remain most unequal. To impose it only on certain classes of incomes, or on all incomes without regard to their origin, is alike subversive of all sound principle. Nothing, therefore, remains but to reject it, or to resort to it only when money must be had at all hazards, when the ordinary and less exceptionable methods of filling the public coffers have been tried and exhausted, and when, as during the late war, Hannibal is knocking at the gates, and national independence must be secured at whatever cost.”—*M^r Culloch*, p. 137.

never be levied on the *few*. If, therefore, this plan were adopted, *all must pay*. In countries where it is adopted, all do pay. In most countries on the Continent, in France, in Germany*, where customs and excise duties form a far less important part of the revenue than here, there is a per centage levied on all personal as well as real property; there is a capitation-tax, a hearth-tax, a trade-tax, a salt-tax, often a bread and meat-tax, besides the vexatious and burdensome *octroi*. From these burdens few or none are exempted. And so it would have to be here, were the prospects of the Liverpool financiers adopted. Taxes on luxuries, if they are luxuries confined to the rich, can never be productive. Even a house-tax, if levied on the absurd principle of the new one—which out of 3,700,000 dwellings, proposes to exempt all under 20*l.*, or six-sevenths of the number—would yield a most insignificant return. Even an income and property-tax, confined to the middle and upper ranks, however heavy it might be, would soon show the working classes that, whatever be the *first incidence* of an unfair impost, the due share of it must finally fall on them. By no jugglery of direct taxation can the many, ultimately or permanently, shift their burdens on to the shoulders of the few. The rich, like the poor, can neither spend nor pay more than they possess. Nine-tenths of them already live up to their income, or as nearly so as they deem prudent;—in other words, they spend as much as they safely can. Take the case of a man with an income of 1000*l.* a year. He pays, we will say, 200*l.* a year in taxes, direct and indirect; the remaining 800*l.* meets his personal expenditure. He keeps three servants, besides a groom and a horse. A new system of

* Much of this is derived from private information sent us by the best informed parties on the Continent. For confirmation, see Laing's "Observations on Europe in 1848 and 1849."

taxation increases his taxes to 400*l.* a year, and of course diminishes his available income to 600*l.* His tea, coffee, and sugar, will cost him less than before, owing to the abolition of customs and excise duties. But the difference will be so slight, that he must diminish his general expenditure materially. He can only do so by paying less wages, or by purchasing less of those articles whose production gives employment to the poor,—*i. e.* by diminishing that portion of his expenditure which was spent, directly or indirectly, in the payment of labour. He dismisses his groom and sells his horse. His groom in the first place, his saddler and blacksmith in the second, and the farmer who supplied him with hay and oats, in the third, are the sufferers. He gives up wine, and deprives of employment the artisan who used to produce the article of export which was formerly sent abroad to purchase his wine. He reduces the expenditure of his family in clothes: the tailor, the shoemaker, the spinner, the weaver, the dyer, feel the effect of his increased taxation. They have their sugar, their tea, their tobacco, their beer, cheaper than before; but the poor groom has lost all his means of purchasing these luxuries, and the other artisans have had their means greatly curtailed. Almost the whole expenditure of the rich man goes, in one form or another, in the employment of labour—often, it is true, in a most unwise employment of it; and when this truth is fully apprehended by the working classes, they will understand that every diminution of the rich man's income, by partial taxation, must recoil upon the poor,—not by a law of parliament, but by a law of economic science, against which parliamentary enactments contend in vain.

If this were fairly stated and fully comprehended, what would be the feeling of the mass of our population on the subject of direct taxation? How would they

who never see the face or hear the unwelcome knock of the tax-gatherer, from the cradle to the grave—who, perhaps, scarcely ever pay a farthing to the revenue at all, or at all events would never find out that they did it, if they were not told—how would they endure to be called upon, year by year, for a house-tax of five per cent., for five per cent. of their wages, or for five shillings a head upon every member of their family? Direct taxes, like any other taxes, are sure to be popular with those who do not pay them. But if the choice were fairly placed before them, between indirect taxation as it now exists, and direct taxation of *which they must bear their fair share*,—between a tax on income, which they could not escape, and a tax on luxuries, which it was optional with them to pay,—who can doubt what would be their instantaneous and unanimous decision? Hitherto, the people have been systematically blinded as to the real question at issue, both by their own misleaders, and by a misjudging legislature. How could they form a just estimate of the relative merits of direct and indirect taxation, when they knew the former only as an income-tax which spared *their* incomes, and a house-tax which spared *their* houses, and the latter as a burden which poisoned every pipe they smoked, soured every glass of beer they drunk, and embittered every cup of tea they sweetened? But when the question is honestly propounded to them: *Not*—“Which do you prefer—a tax which the rich pay and you escape, or one which you pay in common with them?” *but*, “Which do you prefer—a tax which you pay only *when* you like, *if* you like, and *to the extent* you like; or one which, though perhaps smaller in amount, is yet taken from you periodically, inexorably, and however ill you can afford it?”—we are satisfied that the advocates of direct taxation will find few supporters.

We cannot but think that much moral mischief has been done, and serious political danger incurred, both by the custom recently adopted or extended of exempting the lower classes and the smaller incomes from taxation, and still more by the language in which this custom has been advocated. No man has sinned more deeply in this particular than the present chancellor of the exchequer, Sir Charles Wood. We have already had occasion to animadvert upon his lax and slipshod morality. In recommending his new house-tax, on the ground of its exempting all houses under 20*l.* a year, (or, 3,000,000 out of 3,500,000,) he spoke thus:—"In all the commercial and financial measures I have submitted to the House, my principle has been one and the same. I have never turned to the right or to the left to consider what would be a benefit to one class or another; but I have looked to that which would be most beneficial to the great body of our labouring population. They are, in my opinion, the special objects of the care and solicitude of government,—government being instituted for the benefit of the many, not of the few."

It is sad to see a man high in office utter, before a grave assembly, charged with the destinies of millions, twaddle indicating such sad mistiness of view. In the first place, while professing to eschew all class legislation, he adopts a class legislation of the most sweeping, flagrant, and demagogic character. He will not turn aside to consider what will benefit this class or that, but yet he will make it his main object and consideration to benefit the largest class of all. He will inquire, not what is just and fair to all classes, but what will be most desirable for that class whose interests he especially desires to serve. In laying on a tax on dwellings, he will levy it on half a million only, out of three millions and a half, because he desires to benefit the

class who live in the exempted three millions, at the expense of the class who live in the taxed half million. He will lay the burden on the few, not on the many, "because government was instituted for the benefit of the many, *not* of the few." Was it? we had always understood that government was instituted for the benefit of the many *and* of the few. We have always conceived that the distinction here drawn was the essential blunder and vice of vulgar democracy. In proportion to the smallness of that portion of the community on which taxation is imposed, does it assume the character of *confiscation*. In proportion as one class or section is singled out for bearing the burdens of the state, does taxation approach the essence, put on the garb, breathe the poisonous doctrine of *pillage*. We would go to the furthest point of the most thorough democrat in removing every impost which pressed unfairly, injuriously, or oppressively upon the mass of the community; we would apportion the public burdens on the most rigid principle of equity, wherever that can be discovered, and as far as it can be approached; but those who encourage the people to believe that taxation ought to be or can be made to fall upon the upper classes exclusively or disproportionately—those who adopt the course and use the language of the Chancellor of the Exchequer—are laying down a doctrine of the most fatal tendency, and the most flagrant immorality; a doctrine, in fact, which differs only in the extent to which it is proposed *at present* to apply it, from the doctrines of Jack Cade, Barbès, and Blanqui, of the plunderers, spoliators, confiscators, and "equitable adjusters" of all times.

One of the arguments in favour of direct taxation, most relied upon by its advocates, is its superior cheapness. When compared with indirect taxation, it is alleged, it takes less out of the pockets of the people, in

proportion to the amount it puts into the coffers of the exchequer. We admit the truth of the allegation to a certain degree; but that degree has been enormously overstated. The relative cost of collecting the different branches of the revenue in Great Britain is as follows*:—customs, 5*l.* 6*s.* 4*d.* per cent.; excise, 4*l.* 16*s.* 9*d.*; direct taxes (assessed and income), 3*l.* 3*s.* 3*d.* In other words, the direct taxes cost three and one-sixth per cent., and the indirect taxes five per cent., in collecting, leaving an advantage of not quite two per cent. in favour of the former. On the first blush of the matter, then, it would appear as if the entire substitution of the former for the latter would effect a saving of nearly one million a year to the country. How far this would be a sufficient equipoise to the vast addition of irritation and inconvenience which such substitution would entail, may well be doubted. But would the saving be even as great as it appears? This is more than doubtful. In the first place, a wiser adjustment of our customs and excise duties repealing those which yield little and cost much, would reduce the expense of collection most materially. Already we can trace a commencement of such reduction arising from the judicious changes which have been introduced from time to time. Thus we find that in the years from 1830 to 1833, the cost of collecting the customs' duties in Great Britain averaged 5*l.* 19*s.* 7*d.* per cent. In the last four years it has only averaged 5*l.* 7*s.* 3*d.*; and in 1850 was only 5*l.* 6*s.* 4*d.* In the five years from 1835 to 1839 the cost of collecting the excise averaged 6*l.* 6*s.* 4*d.*; in the last five years it has only averaged 5*l.* 7*s.* 2*d.*, and in 1850 was only 4*l.* 16*s.* 9*d.*

But there is another consideration. It is true that the direct taxes are now levied at a collecting cost of three and one-sixth per cent., because they are levied

* Finance Account, 1851. Parl. Papers.

on comparatively few individuals, and in comparatively large sums. But if they became our sole taxes, or even the main basis of our taxation, they must, as we have shown, be extended to all classes, they must be levied upon all individuals, however humble. Instead of Schedule D being demanded from 147,659 individuals (as it was in 1848), it would have to be demanded from probably upwards of a million. Instead of the revenue being collected in sums of 100*l.*, it would have to be collected in sums of 1*l.* and under. Instead of a collector calling once and upon one man for 50*l.*, he would have to call a hundred times, and upon a hundred men. Instead of gathering the house-tax from 500,000 houses, it would have to be gathered from 3,500,000. The 20*s.* a year which the working man (according to our previous estimate) now pays indirectly and unconsciously, and which the collector never has to call upon him for at all, would then have to be wrung out of him by painful pressure, under a variety of heads, and at repeated visits. The collector now gathers the tax on tea or sugar, for example, from about one thousand importing and unmurmuring merchants, who pay it as a matter of course, and without demur. Under the direct system, the same sum would have to be drawn in small amounts from thirty millions of resentful and blaspheming contributors, who would make a point of giving as much trouble as they could. Under such circumstances, is there the least probability that direct taxes could be collected for three and one-sixth per cent., or perhaps for three times that amount? * Is it not evident that to obtain a *large* revenue you levy it

* In confirmation of this, it is important to notice that previous to 1842 (when the income-tax was imposed, which presses on so few), the direct taxes cost nearly as much as the customs and excise in collection, or above five per cent.

from the *many*,—to obtain it *cheaply* you must levy it from, or rather through, the *few*?

We do not therefore see any reason to believe that direct taxes, fairly imposed, would be at all less costly in the collection than indirect ones, judiciously selected and adjusted. We have met boldly, and in the face, the principal recommendations usually urged on behalf of those imposts which are now bidding so high for popular favour. We have shown that when they take the form of an income and property-tax they are inherently and incurably unfair; we have shown that it is very questionable whether they are economical, and that it is beyond question that they are not equitable, and cannot be made so. There are, however, three classes of direct taxes which have our unqualified approval—the assessed taxes, and the house-tax, and the legacy duty. The assessed taxes, now that the window duty has been repealed, seem wholly unobjectionable. They are easily levied; they allow little, if any, room for evasion and deceit; they are taxes on expenditure, not on income; they are taxes on needless luxuries, and if a man wishes at any time to escape the tax, he can do so by foregoing the luxury. If he can afford to indulge in the luxury, it is certain he can afford to pay for it, and should not grudge doing so. Of all taxes a house-tax, fairly levied on the assessable value of the dwelling, and admitting no exemptions, unites most merits, and is open to fewest objections. It is liable to no evasion or dispute; it creates no irritation beyond that which paying away money for an unseen reality unavoidably causes in nearly all minds; its pressure is more equitable than that of any other, since the value of the house in which a man chooses to live offers a criterion of what he can afford to spend (and therefore to pay), not, indeed, perfect and universal, but certainly more accurate than any other test. We particularly

recommend to our readers' attention the section of Mr. Mill's work which he devotes to the consideration of the house-tax, in which he briefly, but most triumphantly, disposes of all the current objections which are urged against it, showing how frivolous most of them are, and how entirely all that have any validity or weight apply not to the principle of the tax itself, but to the faulty and inequitable mode in which it was formerly levied. Now that this tax has been reimposed, we trust to see it made permanent, universal, equal in its pressure, and greatly increased in amount. It may then become—as we hope it will—a substitute for the present income-tax, almost all the recommendations of which it may claim, and all the fatal allegations against which it avoids. A ten per cent. house-tax, laid not on 500,000 dwellings, but on 4,500,000*, would yield a large, steady, and unobnoxious revenue, and possesses, besides this vast supplementary merit, that *the rate* might be raised or lowered according to the yearly necessities of the exchequer, and thus save that constant alteration, repeal, imposition, and reimposition of taxes, which is one of the great mischiefs of our present empiric, unscientific, and hand-to-mouth system. Now, if there be a deficiency, the chancellor has to set his wits to work to devise some new tax that can be laid on with the least outcry, or to select from the old ones that which will best bear an increase; and in doing this it is scarcely possible for him to hit upon one which will not be more or less injurious, or more or less partial in its augmented pressure, and an alteration of which will not, therefore, fairly lay him open to the charge of injustice. If, on the other hand, there is a surplus revenue, the chancellor is immediately assailed with the deafening clamour of twenty rival claimants

* *I. e.*, 3,467,611 in Great Britain, and 852,389 (probably) in Ireland.

for relief ; and whatever tax he selects for repeal, it is scarcely possible for him to avoid favouring one class of the community more than the others, and thus incurring the accusation of partiality. All changes in taxation are in themselves bad, because all involve an *unsettlement* of time-adjusted pressure. Taxes, whatever be their nature and *first incidence*, have a certain tendency, in the course of years, to rectify their own original inequalities, and spread themselves with tolerable fairness over the community. This is one of the most indisputable axioms of economic science, though writers differ as to the rapidity with which the process is effected. But of the inherent faculty of taxation, however partial its imposition in the outset, to place itself gradually and in due proportion on the right shoulders, there can be no controversy. Every change, therefore, every new tax laid on, every old one repealed, disturbs the natural adjustment which has been thus effected, and introduces, for the time, a fresh inequality of pressure, requiring a fresh process of adjustment. But if we had once removed the taxes really injurious to morals and to trade, it would be of inestimable benefit to have no further alteration, to have all taxes settled and permanent, but to meet the varying redundancies or deficiencies of the revenue, as they occurred, by *varying the rate per cent.* of that one impost which pressed equally on all. This, we conceive, would be the greatest practical improvement which could be introduced into our fiscal system.

The legacy duties, in the form in which they are now imposed, are utterly indefensible. Their partiality is gross and flagrant. In the first place, they exempt a vast proportion of the property of the country altogether ; in the second place, they tax small properties at a higher rate than large. From the probate duty, which is levied on the entire personal property devised

by will,—from the duty on letters of administration, which is levied on the entire personalty of parties dying intestate,—and from the legacy duty, which also falls on personalty, but at rates varying according to the degree of consanguinity of the legatee,—all real property is exempt. Railway shares, bank stock, stock in trade, ships, gold, bills of exchange, &c., all pay: land does not. Again, the probate duty, which averages rather more than 2 per cent. on all sums under 2000*l.*, is only about $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on properties of 20,000*l.*, and not much more than $1\frac{1}{4}$ on estates of 100,000*l.* or 1,000,000*l.* The duty on letters of administration is 3 per cent. on the smaller amounts, and only from 2 to $2\frac{1}{4}$ on larger ones. These monstrous injustices have led to a feeling of hostility to a tax which, when fairly imposed and levied, is one of the most equitable and least burdensome that can be devised. In judging the principle of a legacy duty, we must consider it not in the imperfect and objectionable form which it may have assumed under the sinister operation of class interests, but in the form it would assume in the hands of just legislators. Now, if the probate and administrative duties were repealed, and the legacy duty imposed upon *all* property passing by inheritance, at a rate varying, as at present, according to the degree of relationship, from 1 to 10 per cent., we do not see any tax to which so few objections could apply. It is little liable to evasion by donation *inter vivos*, and a slight alteration of the law might still further diminish this liability; it affords scarcely any opening to fraud, because the legal formalities necessary in the due performance of the duties of an executor would give ample means of ascertaining the amounts bequeathed or inherited; it fulfils admirably Adam Smith's third requisite of a good tax (that it should be levied at the time when it is most convenient for the individual to pay it), inasmuch as it is demanded

from him at the very moment when he is receiving a considerable accession of property; and, finally, it is paid with less irritation and reluctance than any other fiscal burden, because it is called for when this accession of property has improved his circumstances, and may be supposed to have put him in good humour. Moreover, there seems a special equity in the tax on a separate ground. It may be regarded as an equivalent paid for the protection of the law under circumstances when an individual is disabled from protecting himself. A man's power over his property naturally ceases with his life; without the intervention of the state he could not secure its reversion to those whom he desired to endow. The state, however, steps in, and says to him, "We will carry out your posthumous wishes with regard to the disposal of your estate when you are helpless and departed, on condition of a moderate and reasonable fee." Thus he pays the ordinary taxes to purchase protection during his lifetime: he pays the legacy duty to purchase a posthumous power over his property, — a power which only an executor like the state can bestow. If there be no property to bequeath, there is no tax paid.

Mr. Mill's estimate of the justice and incidental merits of this tax is so high that he would carry it much further than many will feel prepared to go along with him. He conceives that "the principle of graduation (as it is called), that is, of levying a larger *per centage* on a larger sum, though its application to general taxation would be a violation of first principles, is quite unobjectionable as applied to legacy and inheritance duties." He would, moreover, limit the power of bequest to a fixed amount, making the state residuary legatee in all cases where the property left exceeded this amount to each recipient; and he would make collateral inheritances *ab intestato* cease altogether, and the property escheat to the state. The arguments by which he defends these proposals have, we confess, failed to

satisfy us altogether of their wisdom, but they are well worthy of consideration. They are to be found in the first chapter of his second book.

In comparing the respective merits of direct and indirect taxation—taxes on income and property, and taxes on commodities—much stress is laid by the advocates of the former on its superior economy,—on its taking less than its rival out of the pocket of the people, in proportion to the sum it puts into the coffers of the state. We have already considered this point so far as mere *cost of collection* is concerned; and we have shown that the alleged cheapness of direct taxation in this particular, is rather delusive than genuine—rather accidental and fluctuating than permanent and essential. But another expense attaches to taxes on articles of consumption, which it is important to estimate at its real magnitude. Duties on commodities (it is said) being usually paid by the producers or importers before the commodities are sold to the consumers, increase prices, not only by the amount of the duty, but also by the amount of the profits on that portion of the producer's or importer's capital which was expended in advancing the duty. That is, if the usual and fair profits on capital employed in trade are ten per cent., the article in question reaches the consumer charged not only with the duty, but with the addition of ten per cent. on the amount of that duty; nay more, with an additional ten per cent. laid on by every tradesman through whose hands the article passes. Sismondi goes so far as to say that a tax of 4000 francs, paid originally by the manufacturer or importer, whose profits were ten per cent., would, if the article passed only through the hands of five different persons before reaching the consumer, cost the latter 6734 francs. If this statement were true, or even approached the truth, it would

amount to an indictment against indirect taxation, which scarcely any or all of its acknowledged recommendations would suffice to countervail. But it is obvious that this blundering calculation proceeds upon the assumption that the tax accumulates by compound interest, not at the rate of ten per cent. *per annum*, but at the rate of ten per cent. *at each step of its progress*. If each one of the transmitters retained the article a year in his possession, and it was, therefore, *five years* in reaching the consumer, Sismondi's reasoning would be correct; but if only one year elapsed—and the actual time is seldom so long—then an addition to the original duty of 400 francs instead of 2734, would give a rate of ten per cent. *per annum* to all parties through whose hands the commodity had passed, whether they were five or fifty.

But even when we have thus reduced this objection from the gigantic magnitude to which M. Sismondi's oversight had swelled it, a further and most material deduction must be made. We will assume that a year elapses between the payment of duty by the importer or manufacturer, and its repayment to him by the consumer; the consumer will then pay it with the addition of ten per cent. But *he pays it a year later* than he would otherwise have done: the state required the money at the time it levied it from the importer; if, in place of an indirect, it had been levied by a direct tax on the consumer, he must have paid it in January instead of in December. The money, therefore, has been left in his hand for a whole year, during which period it has yielded him, we may presume, five per cent. The real addition to the consumer is, therefore, not *ten* per cent. but *five*; since whether he pays the tax *plus* five per cent. in January, or *plus* ten per cent. in December, the actual sum taken out of his pocket is the same. The state wants 100*l.* from the tax-payer,

whose money is invested at five per cent. interest; and, taking this by indirect taxation, it takes from him 110*l.*, but it does this a year later than it would have done by direct taxation; and whether it takes 105*l.* from him now, or 110*l.* twelve months hence, must be a matter of complete indifference.

But is there any reason to believe that a year, or any time approaching to it, elapses in ordinary cases between the payment of the duty by the importing merchant, and its recovery from the ultimate consumer? In former days it might have been so; but since the system of bonded warehouses was introduced, the case is altogether changed. Now the merchant can leave his goods under the queen's key, and does not pay the duty till he takes them out for delivery, not indeed to the consumer, but to the dealer who supplies the consumer. The additional capital required, and on which he has to charge his supposed profit of ten per cent., is only needed for the few days or weeks which elapse between *his* payment to the revenue officer, and the shopkeeper's repayment to him: the shopkeeper, again, has only to charge profit on the same capital for the few days and weeks which elapse between his payment to the merchant, and his customer's payment to him. If all parties paid ready money, the whole additional cost to the consumer would be confined to ten per cent. profit on the duty, for the time during which the goods lay unsold in the dealer's shop,—which time he would of course render as short as possible, by holding small stocks and applying to the merchant only a very short time before his previous supply was exhausted. If either vendor *give credit* to either vendee, then the additional price which this credit obliges him to charge for the commodity, is a simple remuneration to him for consenting to remain so long out of possession of his capital. It is interest on money lent to his customer;

and it is mere misrepresentation to speak of it as an addition to the duty advanced by the importer.

The indirect expense of indirect taxation, then, which loomed so large in the distance, turns out, when closely analysed, to be very insignificant;—not, as Sismondi conceived, 70 per cent.,—not, as Ricardo seemed to admit, 10 per cent.,—not even, as for the sake of argument we assumed, 5 per cent., but probably not above $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent., or three months' interest on the amount of the original duty. The enormous cost to the country of many taxes on imported commodities (conjectured to have been in the case of sugar five millions, and in the case of corn twenty millions, annually), arising from their effect in forcing production into unnatural and injudicious channels, and compelling us to buy from one country what we could have procured far more cheaply from another—need not be spoken of here. They are discredited, condemned, and almost swept away. Duties strictly and fairly imposed for the sake of revenue, have nothing in common with duties which are either purposely or incidentally protective; and the ill repute justly attaching to the latter, can by no legitimate process be made to recoil upon the former. Neither need we combat the objections derived from the evil of excessive or ill-selected duties which, like that on tea, curtail consumption, tempt adulteration, lessen by so doing their own productiveness, and diminish the production of those labour-employing articles of export which are used to purchase the commodity so injuriously over-taxed. All arguments drawn from such cases are of weight, not against the principle of indirect taxation, but against its injudicious and clumsy application. They merely show, that the financier who lays himself open to such charges, does not understand his business. They are what logicians call *fallacia accidentis*. They are specimens of the sophism, *à dicto*

secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter, which argues from what is true under particular circumstances, as if it were true nakedly and altogether. They are directed solely against the separable accidents, not against the inherent essentials, of the system.

We pass over with a mere enumeration several minor advantages of indirect taxation, as our limits warn us to draw to a close. Such as the convenience of the time at which the tax is paid by the consumer, which consideration Adam Smith places so high in his list of requisites. Such as its self-adjusting qualities, enabling a man to do for himself what it is one great, but uniformly unattained, object of the science of finance to do for him,—namely, to proportion his fiscal burdens to his capacity of bearing them. Such as its light and evanescent pressure on the poor man, so soon as he becomes *poor enough* to be obliged to dispense with luxuries. Such, finally, as its liability to be thrown, in part at least, on foreigners,—the possibility of which, and the *modus operandi* of effecting it, involves so subtle and intricate a train of reasoning, that we shall not attempt to enter upon it here, but shall content ourselves with referring to the argument of Mr. J. S. Mill, as confirmation of its practicability.*

The most weighty objection brought against customs and excise duties, is their alleged demoralising tendency. They encourage smuggling, and tempt to fraudulent adulteration. It is impossible to deny the accusation. But two pleas may be urged in mitigation, which will go far to prevent sentence of condemnation from being passed. In the first place, the charge is valid against excessive, not against moderate, duties. If the duties are so high as to leave the profits of the smuggler—*all risks included*—decidedly greater than those of the

* Principles of Political Economy, vol. ii. p. 405. Essays on some unsettled Questions of Political Economy.

fair trader, such duties are not only demoralising, but suicidal. But these immoderate duties have long been condemned, and in the majority of cases abandoned. Our experience in the case of the excise on spirits and the duty on silks, as in many other instances, proved the effect of the lowering of the duty in discouraging and knocking up the smuggling trade, and thus clearly showed that *this* argument, like others we have just disposed of, bore not against indirect taxation, but against enormous and abortive taxation,—not against import and excise duties *per se*, but against such injudicious and ineffective duties as no financier who was master of his profession would dream of imposing. To impose a duty which rendered smuggling and adulteration overpoweringly attractive—which gave higher inducements to the smuggler than the tradesman's native preference for honesty and the vigilance of the coast-guard were competent to countervail—would be to impose a duty which failed of its purpose, and the imposition of which, therefore, would be a proof of the incapacity of the statesman who laid it on. It is true that we have not yet fully carried out the maxims of fiscal wisdom which our experience has taught us; and that in the case of tea and of tobacco we still retain duties which offer irresistible temptations to the smuggler and adulterator; but their operation is now well understood, and their death-warrant is already signed—as far, that is, as refers to their self-defeating and illegitimate *excess*. In the second place, temptations to evasion are inherent in the nature of every tax, in proportion to its disagreeableness and the severity of its pressure. We know the subterfuges often resorted to in the case of the assessed taxes; we have seen something of the enormous stimulus to fraud arising from the income-tax; the revenue is defrauded in the several departments of the Legacy Duty, the Stamp Duties, and

the Post Office;—and, while fully admitting the validity of the objection in question, when urged against excise and customs duties, we hold that it is one of those objections which, as we have seen, inevitably attach to things so intrinsically evil in their nature, as all taxes are; and that, where the duties are moderate in amount and judiciously selected, they are as little open to it as almost any direct tax that can be named, except a house-tax,—and far less open than many that might be specified, such as an income-tax.

We now come to the final consideration,—on which we are at issue with, and diametrically opposed to, the popular declaimers against indirect taxation, viz., the comparative ease with which it is levied, the comparative unreluctance—approaching to unconsciousness—with which it is paid. This the Liverpool financiers regard as its decisive demerit: this we regard as its crowning recommendation. Horace says of poems:

“Non satis est pulchra esse poemata, dulcia sunt.”

We hold this to apply in the case of taxes also. They should be, as far as possible, not only theoretically beautiful, but practically sweet. If an impost must be levied, let it be done with as little irritation and annoyance as the thing will admit of. When a painful operation has to be performed, it is surely desirable to effect it while the patient is under the influence of chloroform. If the life-blood must be extracted from a man, it is unquestionable mercy to throw him first into a deep sleep. “Not so (say the financial reformers): this would remove the most efficient check on the extravagance of government. If taxes are made pleasant, or even endurable, there is no limit to the amount that may be extracted from the people—if, by the perfection of art, they are reduced to a kind of insensible perspiration, the patient may be bled to death before he is

aware. The best security we can have for the economical expenditure of the public money, is to make taxation so disgusting and burdensome, that the people will grudge every farthing they are called upon to pay." Surely this argument is very childish and very shallow. Englishmen are scarcely such infants as to require to be treated in this way. If the taxation be not needed for the due furtherance of public objects, it is wrong to levy it, and weak to pay it; if it be needed, it is silly to grudge it, and would be double silliness to raise it in any but the least objectionable way. But let the matter be argued on its own grounds: let us tie our government down in the strictest mode we can devise to expend the public money for none but the most just, important, and valuable purposes; let us, by the closest vigilance, compel them so to manage, as to obtain these purposes as cheaply as they can; but let us not adopt so blind, clumsy, empirical a way of reaching our end, as the excitement of a needless detestation of taxation, which will be equally likely to cut down or to refuse the best as the worst employed revenue. If the physic is unnecessary, why take it at all? if it be necessary, why make it superfluously nauseous?

The truth is, that at present the danger is all the other way. Partly from the natural dislike to pay away money for which no immediate and visible equivalent is received,—partly owing to the violent, thoughtless, and often uncandid and unfair language of that section of politicians, who for years have been urging retrenchment upon the government as its chief duty, and exciting the hostility of the people against taxation as their chief grievance,—the difficulty is becoming yearly greater of raising revenue sufficient for the maintenance of the national credit, the vindication of the national honour, and the improvement and efficacy of the national institutions. This is the natural and

inevitable consequence of the language habitually held, and the line of argument pursued for many years back, by the more demagogic of our public men, and at times also, and for party purposes, by statesmen whom we should be loth, even in thought, to class with these. There is no road to temporary popularity so easy, so low, or so inconsiderate as that which is offered by an appearance of excessive vigilance over all drafts upon the public purse, by leading the onslaught upon this or that obnoxious impost. But neither is there any road which more certainly leads to ultimate failure—which entails a more sure or more richly merited retribution. All taxes are unpopular; and necessarily so. None can be devised by the wit of man which do not press inconveniently, and often painfully, upon some classes, or upon all: abuse of any tax is, therefore, sure to meet with ready sympathy from millions. No tax can be discovered to which there may not be urged some serious and valid objections: a severe exposure and hostile criticism of any tax, therefore, will find an echo in the reason, as well as in the feelings, of all hearers. Taxes in their best estate are only necessary evils; they are all, more or less, directly burdensome, and incidentally mischievous: if a proof of their objectionable nature were a sufficing argument for their removal, it would be impossible to raise a revenue at all. But our popular financial reformers have been too much in the habit of representing the government as a body hostile to the people, and fond of bleeding them for some selfish purpose of its own; forgetting that, though there have been times in our history when this representation was in a great measure true, those times have long since passed away; and that the traditional language of agitating orators, which befitted the days of Walpole and Pelham and Pitt, is out of place and unbecoming now. They have too often incautiously

spoken as if taxes were things which could be dispensed with ; evils to be escaped altogether, not evils *to be chosen among* ; and the masses have listened greedily to language which harmonised with their sentiments, and seemed to justify their discontents.

It is, we seriously think, high time to make a systematic and determined stand against the mischievous consequences of these inconsiderate and uncandid representations. It is essential to our future safety and good government that all leaders of public opinion, whether in parliament or in the press—all on whom now rests, or may hereafter rest, the duty of ruling the country, or of influencing those who rule it—should take a deliberate view of the solemn responsibilities attached to their position, and, warned by indications of the dangerous tendency of an opposite course, should resolve to abstain in future, whatever temporary triumph they may thereby have to forego, from arousing that “ignorant impatience of taxation” which, if carried much further, and persevered in much longer, bids fair to end in rendering the wise and safe administration of this great empire a task almost impossible. Already it is difficult to modify or exchange a tax without raising a storm which no cautious Chancellor of the Exchequer will readily encounter. Already it is difficult to maintain inviolate sources of revenue which every man, with the slightest insight into public business, knows to be perfectly indispensable. Already, on more than one occasion, legislators, whose class sympathies overpowered their sense of imperial necessities, or whose thirst for popularity was stimulated by an approaching dissolution, have voted the repeal of taxes which it was impossible to spare, and have been compelled to rescind the idle and disreputable vote. Already the most valuable and important schemes have been relinquished, from the unwillingness of the country to submit to the

slightest additional expense for their promotion, or still more from the dislike felt by the government of the day to risk the unpopularity of proposing such addition. Already questions of the widest range, and the most vital moment to the grandeur and stability of our empire—colonial questions, European questions, judicial reforms—are discussed, not as matters involving high statesmanship and philosophic patriotism, but as they bear upon the financial prospects of the year, as portion of the details of the army and navy estimates! In April last, Lord Truro distinctly alleged the unwillingness of the House of Commons to vote the necessary funds, or, as it afterwards appeared, the reluctance of ministers to ask for them—as a ground why he dare not propose those Chancery reforms which every lawyer and every statesman concurred in declaring absolutely indispensable. He is reported to have said, “His noble friend seemed not aware of the extreme jealousy with which that House looks upon any increase in the expense of the judicial departments of the state. *There lies the evil. The temper of the present time is not disposed to make the necessary sacrifice for the administration of justice.* The business of the Court of Chancery has greatly increased; it is, in fact, extremely heavy. There is not sufficient judicial strength there; and it is very doubtful whether the House of Commons would add to that judicial strength.”* There is terrible and stinging sarcasm in all this; and the temper here pointed at is fraught with menace and with mischief. We shall scarcely be accused, by any who have watched our course from the beginning, of being ad-

* The House, we rejoice to say, vindicated itself from this charge, in as far, at least, as it voted the salaries of two new judges without remonstrance. But the timid and hesitating way in which Lord John Russell proposed the vote, and his evident reluctance to do so, and dread of its probable reception, spoke volumes.

vocates either of lavish expenditure or of needless taxation: we have fought in the ranks of retrenchment and reform too earnestly and too long not to have earned the right to speak our thoughts now, and to be listened to with patience and candour when we say, that England can well bear, and ought not to grudge, any expenditure needed for the maintenance of the national credit, for the completion and consolidation of the national interests, for the perfecting of our judicial institutions, for the collection of that full and close statistical information without which rulers must often be working in the dark, and for the remuneration of those public services which, where truly, ably, and conscientiously rendered, it is not easy to overpay. We warn the country that the danger is imminent and serious, when a low and bastard economy has become the god of our idolatry, when a Lord Chancellor can utter without shame, and without clear untruth, such a plea for misgovernment as we have quoted. What *ought* to be done, *dares not* be done (we are told), because our senators take a narrow, partial, short-sighted view of their duties, and forget that they have other and higher functions than that of mere guardians of the public purse. They forget that they are intrusted with the money of the nation, in order that they may purchase therewith those blessings which the nation needs, and on which its happiness, reputation, and prosperity depend. They forget that their duty is so to dispense the public revenue as to further most effectually those objects which the public has at heart, and for which the community consents to be taxed; and that, if the first of these be defence against foreign foes, the second, at least, is the administration of prompt, easy, and impartial justice at home. In proportion as Lord Truro's charge is true—and it is impossible entirely to gainsay it,—in proportion as ministers shrink, and are ex-

cusable in shrinking, from applying to the House for needful funds for important and righteous purposes, out of a dread of its parsimonious temper; and in proportion as this temper has been fostered by the class of financial reformers to whom we have referred, are we justified in saying, that the sticklers for "cheap government" are—unconsciously perhaps, and unintentionally—the supporters of mal-administration;—that matters have reached a point at which reform or retrenchment no longer go hand in hand, but are pitted against one another; that, in a word, those who would *save* the money of the people, and those who would *spend it well*, are no longer identical, but distinct, at issue, and antagonistic. Economy in the public expenditure is a great object, and a sacred duty; but there are aims yet worthier and nobler, and obligations yet holier and more imperative. The education of our brutal and neglected masses is one of these. The promotion of those sanitary reforms on which health, life, decency, and morality so essentially depend, is one of these. The amendment of our judicial system, till it becomes in fact what it claims to be in theory, is another. The reform of our prisons, of the provision for juvenile criminals, of our whole arrangements for secondary punishments, is again an obligation of paramount magnitude, and clamorous for immediate initiation. The maintenance of those colonial interests which bind our distant dependencies to the mother country, on which hangs the future spread and permanence of our special and highly valued form of civilisation, is another of those mighty objects with which no mere considerations of immediate parsimony can be allowed to come into competition. And, finally, a prior and more sacred claim than any pecuniary saving, is the unimpaired preservation of those effective elements and external manifestations of national strength and vigour, which will not

only secure Great Britain from personal danger, but will enable her to speak with decision and with influence, when she speaks at all ; which will render her in future, as in the past, the protectress of the weak, and the refuge of the oppressed ; which will enable her, when civilisation is endangered, when humanity is outraged, when morality is trampled under foot, to remonstrate in that language of disgust and indignation which could not be rashly disregarded ; which, in a word—when one sovereign tramples out the guaranteed and consolidated freedom of his subjects, as in the case of Hesse ; when another summons in the savage succour of a barbarous power to aid him in crushing the liberties of a generous and long-descended people, as in the case of Hungary ; when a third violates every promise, ravishes every right, sanctions every cruelty, sets at nought every decency, as in the case of Naples ; or when the uncontrolled citizens of a powerful state do not scruple to turn pirates, and invade an unoffending neighbour, simply because they covet her possessions, as in the case of Cuba—will empower her, when such iniquities are perpetrated, to step forward, fearless of the consequences, and bold in her conscious capacity to meet them, and say, “ These things shall not be ! ”

These considerations appear to us so important at the present juncture, and in the actual state of the public mind, that we are glad to fortify ourselves by the opinions of a writer whose deep popular sympathies it is impossible to doubt, and whose deliberate and searching wisdom has won him the first place among social philosophers, — we mean Mr. J. S. Mill. The intense dissatisfaction which would arise were our whole revenue “ of fifty millions raised by direct taxes, would,” he conceives, “ be productive of more harm than good. Of the fifty millions in question nearly thirty are pledged, under the most binding obligations, to those whose

capital has been borrowed and spent by the state; and while this debt remains unredeemed, a greatly increased impatience of taxation would involve no little danger of a breach of faith similar to that which, in the defaulting States of America, has been produced, and in some of them still continues, from the same cause. That part, indeed, of the public expenditure which is devoted to the maintenance of civil and military establishments, is still in many cases unnecessarily profuse; but though many of the items will bear great reduction, others certainly require increase. There is hardly any public reform or improvement of the first rank, proposed of late years, and still remaining to be effected, which would not probably require, at least for a time, an increased instead of a diminished appropriation of public money. Whether the object be popular education, emigration and colonisation, a more efficient and accessible administration of justice, a more judicious treatment of criminals, improvement in the condition of soldiers and sailors, a more effective police, reforms of any kind which, like slave emancipation, require compensation to individual interests; or, finally, what is as important as any of these, the entertainment of a sufficient staff of able and highly educated public servants to conduct, in a better than the present awkward manner, the business of legislation and administration; every one of these things implies considerable expense, and *many of them have again and again been prevented by the reluctance which exists to apply to parliament for an increased grant of public money*, though the cost would be repaid, often a hundred-fold, in mere pecuniary advantage to the community generally. I fear that we should have to wait long for most of these things if taxation were as odious as it probably would be if it were exclusively direct.”*

* Principles of Political Economy, vol. ii. p. 418.

It is time to sum up, and bring this long paper to a close. We have seen that there is no tax to which valid objections do not apply, — no tax which is not, more or less, inequitable in its pressure, injurious in its operation, and annoying in its collection. This objection, though from its universality not decisive against any particular tax, is decisive against making it the only one. It is in a *variety* of imposts that we are to look for the solution of the great problem of the Finance Minister — how to make taxation equitable and endurable. We have seen that the apparent merits of direct taxation are apparent only. We have seen that it does not fulfil *all* the requirements of Adam Smith's "good tax" better than the indirect system, and that it scarcely fulfils any of them better. It is at least as unequal in its incidence, as unfair in its severity, as prolific in stimulants to fraud — and immeasurably more irritating and vexatious. It is even questionable whether it is more economical in the collection. It is the first, the easiest, the coarsest mode which suggests itself to rude and uncivilised financiers. The paramount duty of a government in fiscal matters, is to levy the revenue *fairly*: This takes precedence over all other considerations. But next to this, if its first duty is to levy taxes so as to cause least injury, its second unquestionably is to levy them so as to cause least irritation. We have seen, finally, that taxation, whether direct or indirect, cannot be, and ought not to be, confined to the few ; — that to approach this verges upon confiscation, that to recommend it is to preach *Jacquerie* and spoliation.

At the risk of exposing ourselves to the sarcasms with which the actual Chancellor of the Exchequer loves to reward those "amateurs" who offer him useful suggestions or hint that there is a Science in his Art which he has not fathomed, and principles in fiscal policy which he has not mastered or habitually sets at nought,

— we shall venture to enumerate those sources of revenue on which — following out the views above developed — we think it would be safe, just, and prudent to rely. The first of these is a house-tax, which, taking a pivot of 20 per cent., should vary from 15 to 25 per cent., according to the exigencies of the exchequer. This should be levied on all the 4,500,000 houses in the kingdom, without exemption. Of these it is estimated that about 500,000 are above 20*l.*, a year rent, and the rest under.* The former we may fairly take at an average rent of 45*l.*, which, at 20 per cent., would yield 4,500,000*l.* : — the latter, at an average rent of 5*l.*, would yield above 4,000,000*l.* more. The legacy duty, on *personal* property only, now yields 1,400,000*l.* :—if levied at the same rate on *all* property, it would bring, it is calculated, 3,000,000*l.* into the exchequer. The land and assessed taxes in Great Britain, leaving out the window-tax, reach 2,835,000*l.* : — If Ireland were included we might take them at 3,000,000*l.* So much for

* The data of the above calculation are as follows. The total inhabited houses in Great Britain are (in 1851) 3,647,611, to which we may add for Ireland 852,389. [The actual number by the last census is 13,828,839; but a very large proportion of these are mere cabins.] Now, till 1824, we had a house-tax in Great Britain levied on all houses (except farm-houses) above 5*l.* a year rent. In that year there were—

	<i>Houses.</i>	<i>Rent.</i>	<i>Average Rent.</i>
Above 5 <i>l.</i> and under 10 <i>l.</i> ,	171,522	£1,161,667	6 <i>l.</i> 15 <i>s.</i> 0 <i>d.</i>
10 <i>l.</i> and upwards	- 375,410	10,516,550	28 <i>l.</i> 0 <i>s.</i> 0 <i>d.</i>
In the same year there were			
under 20 <i>l.</i> - - -	361,513	3,537,742	9 <i>l.</i> 15 <i>s.</i> 0 <i>d.</i>
above 20 <i>l.</i> - - -	185,419	8,140,475	43 <i>l.</i> 15 <i>s.</i> 0 <i>d.</i>
In that year all houses under 10 <i>l.</i> were exempted.			
In 1833, just before the entire repeal of the tax, the case stood thus—			
From 10 <i>l.</i> to 20 <i>l.</i> - -	227,604	2,997,524	13 <i>l.</i> 3 <i>s.</i> 0 <i>d.</i>
20 <i>l.</i> and upwards	- 214,438	9,606,388	44 <i>l.</i> 15 <i>s.</i> 0 <i>d.</i>

direct taxes.—The tax on tea should be reduced certainly to 1s. a pound, perhaps still lower, but would probably, according to all analogy, yield at that rate as large a revenue as at present. The tax on spirits and tobacco, there can be no reason for reducing below the point at which smuggling and illicit distillation could be prevented. Probably this might entail some loss on the article of tobacco. Our budget would then stand thus — taking the receipts of 1849 as our standard : —

DIRECT TAXES—

House Tax	-	-	-	-	£8,500,000
Legacy Duty	-	-	-	-	3,000,000
Assessed Taxes	-	-	-	-	3,000,000
					£14,500,000

INDIRECT TAXES—

British Spirits	-	-	-	-	£6,000,000
Malt	-	-	-	-	5,000,000
Tobacco	-	-	-	-	4,400,000
Wine and Foreign Spirits				-	4,600,000
Tea	-	-	-	-	5,500,000
Sugar	-	-	-	-	4,000,000
Coffee	-	-	-	-	500,000
Miscellaneous Articles of Luxury					1,000,000
Post Office	-	-	-	-	1,000,000
					32,000,000
					£46,500,000

46,500,000*l.*, out of the 50,000,000*l.* needed, is thus provided for. The remainder might be raised by a continuance of the present modified stamp duties, till the augmented consumption of the above articles, which would ensue as our population increased and improved, rendered them superfluous ; or, as Mr. Mill suggests, by raising 10,000,000*l.* instead of 8,500,000*l.* from the house-tax, and by a higher legacy duty.

ENGLAND AS IT IS.*

THIS book is a somewhat undigested mass of valuable matter, interspersed occasionally with reflections of much interest, and observations of considerable originality. The author is unquestionably a man of talent; he writes with vigour and smartness; he has taken pains in the collection of most of his materials; and his statistics are arranged with great care, and managed with unusual skill. In this point he is much superior to his prototype and apparent master, Mr. Alison. But his range of topics is too wide to allow of his doing justice to any one of them, and his book is disfigured with an unwieldy series of quotations from blue books, newspapers, and reviews; from publications that never had authority, and publications that have long been superseded. An enumeration of the heads of some of his chapters, will give an idea of the extent of ground which he careers over:—"Population;" "Occupations of the People;" "Taxation, Revenue, Expenditure;" "Theory of Progress;" "Condition of the People;" "Crime;" "Manners, Conversation;" "Rich and Poor;" "Railways;" "Sir Robert Peel;" "The Press;" "The Tenth of April;" "The Church;" "Solicitors and Attorneys;" "Supply of London with Meat;" "Drinking Habits;" "The Poor Law;" and many others. All these grave topics are disposed of in a positive off-hand manner, and in the tone we might

* From the "Edinburgh Review."

England as it is; Political, Social, and Industrial, in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century. By WILLIAM JOHNSTON, Barrister-at-Law. London: 1851.

expect from a man of lively and inquiring mind, whose Tory predilections and protectionist opinions are often so one-sided, as to show us as much of "England as it is not," as of "England as it is."

The book, on the whole, however, is decidedly readable, though, besides its discursiveness, it has two rather serious faults. If we except two or three chapters, the writer has no personal or practical knowledge of any of the subjects which he treats. The chapters devoted to law and the legal profession will be interesting to the unlearned, because there the author is comparatively *en pays de connaissance*; and from the same cause, the chapters on Manners and Conversation are about the best in the book, because society—that is, London literary, legal, and political society—at least in one of its many-coloured aspects, appears to be familiar to him; not so life in the provinces, and society among the middle classes. While, of the people—of the component parts of our social structure in detail—of the character, feelings, and position of the masses—he knows practically nothing, having looked at them through the medium of books alone. His source of information on these points is sometimes the "Times" newspaper; sometimes an obscure pamphlet; sometimes a party review; sometimes a blue book. He speaks as a barrister from his brief, who makes the most of the materials furnished to him, but who has never come into personal communication with his client, or seen the premises or machine on which he descants so fluently to the jury.

The second great fault of the book is the absence of any distinct purpose or object. It is not easy to understand why the author should have been at the pains of writing it, unless with the view (which he seems to entertained at the beginning) of giving a general
of England to some foreign friend. For this,

however, the work would be at once redundant and imperfect. For any more definite aim it is decidedly defective. The want of a back-bone—of a central idea, to connect and bind together the miscellaneous matter of which the book consists—of some clear principle or set of opinions to be illustrated and enforced—of some distinct object to be achieved,—is strongly felt by the reader as he goes on; and we wonder it did not manifest itself to the writer likewise.

As far, however, as any one prevailing idea can be detected in the book, it is that England is going to the dogs: as far as any distinct purpose can be traced, it is to prove our national peril and retrogression. It would be unjust to class "England as it is," with the absurd and malignant work of Ledru Rollin ("La Décadence de l'Angleterre"); but there are some undeniable resemblances between them. Both authors are disposed to paint English society *en noir*, to think that our imperial star is on the wane, that our national maturity is past, and that old age and decrepitude are at hand. It is natural that a foreigner of virulent passions and disappointed ambition, an exile and a fugitive, should thus gloat over the fancied ruin of a rival nation, even while he owes to its generous and powerful hospitality his security from the vengeance of his own countrymen: it is, perhaps, natural also, that an English politician, seriously attached to the party so long dominant, and so recently and signally defeated, should distrust the success and dread the consequences of a course of policy which he has all his life conscientiously opposed, and that he should be seen mistaking the discomfiture of his party for the ruin of his country; but we were scarcely prepared for the easy indifference with which Mr. Johnston enumerates the symptoms of our national decay, and the quiet complacency with which he accepts our decline as a settled historical fact. For ourselves, we



only secure Great Britain from personal danger, but will enable her to speak with decision and with influence, when she speaks at all ; which will render her in future, as in the past, the protectress of the weak, and the refuge of the oppressed ; which will enable her, when civilisation is endangered, when humanity is outraged, when morality is trampled under foot, to remonstrate in that language of disgust and indignation which could not be rashly disregarded ; which, in a word—when one sovereign tramples out the guaranteed and consolidated freedom of his subjects, as in the case of Hesse ; when another summons in the savage succour of a barbarous power to aid him in crushing the liberties of a generous and long-descended people, as in the case of Hungary ; when a third violates every promise, ravishes every right, sanctions every cruelty, sets at nought every decency, as in the case of Naples ; or when the uncontrolled citizens of a powerful state do not scruple to turn pirates, and invade an unoffending neighbour, simply because they covet her possessions, as in the case of Cuba—will empower her, when such iniquities are perpetrated, to step forward, fearless of the consequences, and bold in her conscious capacity to meet them, and say, “ These things shall not be ! ”

These considerations appear to us so important at the present juncture, and in the actual state of the public mind, that we are glad to fortify ourselves by the opinions of a writer whose deep popular sympathies it is impossible to doubt, and whose deliberate and searching wisdom has won him the first place among social philosophers, — we mean Mr. J. S. Mill. The intense dissatisfaction which would arise were our whole revenue “ of fifty millions raised by direct taxes, would,” he conceives, “ be productive of more harm than good. Of the fifty millions in question nearly thirty are pledged, under the most binding obligations, to those whose

capital has been borrowed and spent by the state; and while this debt remains unredeemed, a greatly increased impatience of taxation would involve no little danger of a breach of faith similar to that which, in the defaulting States of America, has been produced, and in some of them still continues, from the same cause. That part, indeed, of the public expenditure which is devoted to the maintenance of civil and military establishments, is still in many cases unnecessarily profuse; but though many of the items will bear great reduction, others certainly require increase. There is hardly any public reform or improvement of the first rank, proposed of late years, and still remaining to be effected, which would not probably require, at least for a time, an increased instead of a diminished appropriation of public money. Whether the object be popular education, emigration and colonisation, a more efficient and accessible administration of justice, a more judicious treatment of criminals, improvement in the condition of soldiers and sailors, a more effective police, reforms of any kind which, like slave emancipation, require compensation to individual interests; or, finally, what is as important as any of these, the entertainment of a sufficient staff of able and highly educated public servants to conduct, in a better than the present awkward manner, the business of legislation and administration; every one of these things implies considerable expense, and *many of them have again and again been prevented by the reluctance which exists to apply to parliament for an increased grant of public money*, though the cost would be repaid, often a hundred-fold, in mere pecuniary advantage to the community generally. I fear that we should have to wait long for most of these things if taxation were as odious as it probably would be if it were exclusively direct.”*

* Principles of Political Economy, vol. ii. p. 418.

ness connected with it reveals, for the present, in unabated triumph."

In another place he says :—

"We regard with admiring wonder the inventions of science, and our respect for human ingenuity is vastly increased; but when we inquire how far the use of them has benefited the great mass of the people, we are compelled to dismiss all sense of triumph in their achievements. . . . It seems to me that there can be no doubt of the total failure of the working class to accomplish any advance at all. . . . I do not find it specifically denied by any class of politicians that since 1819 the rich have been growing richer, and the poor more poor."

Now all these statements we hold to be utterly untrue. Mr. Johnston has fallen into the common error of writers who treat of subjects of which they have not enough personal cognisance to enable them to read with judgment and discrimination. There is evidence enough—that is, printed assertions—always to be found in favour of every theory and every opinion; and an advocate, therefore, who merely pleads from his brief, is at the mercy of the particular set of documents which may chance to be put into his hands, since he has no independent knowledge in virtue of which he can decide upon their value. He may form a perfectly honest and a perfectly sound judgment as far as the data before him are concerned; but unless these data contain all that is required for the formation of a just opinion, or unless his own acquaintance with the case can supply the deficiency of the documentary evidence supplied him, he may be led into the strangest fallacies, and his decision may be utterly worthless. From Mr. Busfield Ferrand's harangues, from Mr. Sadler's Committee, and even from Lord Ashley's speeches, Mr. Johnston might derive, by the strictest and fairest process of deduction, notions upon the wretchedness and sickness of the factory population, which a walk through a cotton mill,

a conversation with an operative, or a study of the blue books issued by the Factory Commission and the Factory Inspectors, would dissipate into thin air. Written evidence, whether statistical or other, is only available and safe in the hands of a man who can sift and test it. In the present case it has led Mr. Johnston grievously astray;—for it is not difficult to show that the inventions of science, so far from having been turned to the exclusive service of the rich and great, have been directed in a paramount and peculiar manner to comfort and facilitate the daily existence of the working classes;—that the augmentation of national wealth has been participated in to a remarkable degree by all ranks in the community, and has added greatly to the comforts of the poor and needy;—and that there is abundant reason for suspecting the common assertion of “the rich growing richer, and the poor poorer,” to be the reverse of true.

We are not disposed to draw a picture *couleur de rose* of the condition of our people, any more than we are willing to accept our author’s *silhouette en noir*. We have been too long and too near witnesses of their struggles and their sorrows, to feel any temptation to ignore them, or make light of them. But we must remember that the question is not now,—whether our present state is satisfactory? but, Is it improving or deteriorating? Are we advancing, or retrograding in civilisation and well-being? Is our actual progress so slow, as to make us despair about the future? or, worse still, Is our improvement confined to the outside, the surface, and the summit, while all within is hollow, and a varnished decay is busy at our vitals? Admitting then, and deploring, as we do, that the condition of the masses is far from the ideal we might form, far even from a point at once desirable, attainable, and due,—we affirm that it has improved, and is still improving,

with a rapidity, and in a direction, which, viewed aright, justify the most sanguine anticipations.

“The inventions of science have not benefited the poorer classes.” — Have they not? Look at railroads, the great scientific marvel of the age, which, in the course of twenty years, have brought the remotest parts of our islands within twenty-four hours of each other, which have quintupled our locomotive speed, and multiplied the amount of our locomotion in a ratio that baffles calculation. Who have been the chief gainers by them? Clearly the poor, to whom, formerly, locomotion was a thing almost impossible; who, for the most part, passed the whole of life in the narrow circuit of their native hamlet, or the town in which they were apprenticed; who frequently lived and died without visiting the next valley, or crossing the range of low hills which were ever before their eyes; who, if compelled by dire necessity to travel, trudged painfully on foot, weary, limping, and heavy-laden; who, on their rare holidays, could find no recreation but wandering in familiar fields, or boozing at the wonted tavern. The wealthy could always travel in luxurious carriages with spirited post-horses, which carried them along at the rate of eighteen pence a mile. The middle classes indulged their restless or curious propensities on the top of the mail coach, a mode of conveyance to which even now they look back with affection and regret. But the poor, till this great application of science to their use, were absolutely rooted to their place of birth: they heard of London, or York, or the mountains, or the lakes, as distant scenes replete with wonders and attractions, but as inaccessible as Paradise to them. Now, every fine Sunday, every summer holiday, sees hundreds of thousands of artisans rush from the smoky recesses of Liverpool or London to make merry with their friends, or refresh themselves after a week of toil

with the gay verdure and invigorating air of the country. For the smallest sums, they are carried in cheap trips to see York minster, or to wander on the cliffs of Scarborough, or bathe in the sea at Dover;—they are poured out in multitudes on the shores of Windermere; and conveyed, almost without any intervention of their own, to London, to Dublin, to Paris, at a cost which few among them cannot, by an effort, manage to afford. What these new facilities must have done to counterbalance and compete with the low pleasures of intemperance and gambling, how they have interfered with the cock-fight, and unpeopled the race-course, and replaced the bull-bait, may be easily conceived. A “cheap trip” is now, with the artisan class, the established mode of passing a leisure day. In 1848, the number who left Manchester alone, in Whitsun week, by these excursion trains, was 116,000; in 1849 it had risen to 150,000; and last year it reached 202,000. Mr. Johnston himself gives a table (vol i. p. 285.) which should have prevented him from penning the rash sentence we have quoted from him on the uselessness of scientific improvements to the poor. In 1849 the number who travelled by railway were as follows:—

	Passengers.	Receipts.
First Class - - -	7,292,811	£1,927,768
Second - - -	23,521,650	2,530,968
Third and Parliamentary	32,890,323	1,816,476

Thus it appears that the poorer classes travelled by railway to the number of nearly 33,000,000, and could afford to spend in that mode of recreation nearly 2,000,000*l*. They outnumbered the middle classes in the proportion of *four to three*, and the wealthier classes in the proportion *four to one*.

“The condition of the working classes has deterio-

rated, and their command over the comforts of life has diminished."—Has it? Let us look at facts again. At the close of the last century, rye, oat, and barley bread were extensively consumed throughout the country: according to one authority, rye bread was the habitual food of one-seventh of the population: it is now entirely disused, and the use of wheaten bread is almost universal among even the poorest classes. To what extent their consumption of this has increased, we have no means of knowing with any approach to accuracy. According to the calculation of Lord Hawkesbury, the consumption of wheat in the kingdom in 1796 was 6,000,000 quarters; it is now estimated by the most careful authorities (but of course, as we have no agricultural statistics, this is merely an estimate) at 15,200,000 quarters. The growth of wheat in England is known to have enormously increased; and besides this, the amount of wheat and wheat-flour imported and retained for home consumption, which was 2,317,480 quarters in the five years ending with 1800, had increased in the five years ending with 1850 to 15,463,530 quarters. Vast as has been our importation since, it has all gone into consumption as fast as it was landed. Of course, the difference between our population at the several periods is to be taken into account. But, all things considered, probably the price of grain may be the best proximate test of the command of the working classes over this the first necessary of life. Now, a comparison of the past and present gives us a conclusive result; and it is a fair comparison, because the potato-disease and the famine of 1847 form an ample set-off against the bad harvests at the beginning of the century. The average price of wheat during the first ten years of the century was 83s. 6d.; during the last ten years it was only 53s. 4d. The same earnings therefore which in the last generation could command only five quartern

loaves would now purchase eight. The fall in the cost of other articles of daily consumption among the poor has been nearly, if not quite, as great. Coffee, which fifty years ago was selling at 200*s.* a cwt., may now be purchased, of equal quality, at 117*s.*; tea, in the same period, has fallen from 5*s.* to 3*s.* 4*d.* a lb.; and sugar from 80*s.* to 41*s.* a cwt. In articles of clothing the reduction is even more remarkable: a piece of printing calico, 29 yards long, which is made into three gowns, and which as late even as 1814, cost 28*s.* in the wholesale warehouse, is now sold for 6*s.* 6*d.*, and two years ago sold as low as 5*s.* A piece of good 4-quarter Irish linen (13⁰⁰ quality) bleached, sold in 1800 at 3*s.* 2*d.* a yard. Goods, the nearest to the same kind now made, sell at 14*d.* Grey 4-quarter shirting (20⁰⁰ quality), which cost 5*s.* 6*d.* a yard in 1800, and 3*s.* 6*d.* in 1830, now sells for 1*s.* 6*d.*; and the cost of bleaching it is reduced in the same proportion, viz., from 12*s.* a piece in 1800 and 8*s.* in 1830, to 3*s.* 6*d.* in the present year.

These facts prove that the poor have the power of purchasing a larger quantity of food and clothing than formerly with the same sum. But we can go a step further than this, and can show, in the case of many articles, that they actually *do* supply themselves more liberally than formerly. We have seen that they do so with wheat. The average consumption of coffee (in spite of the great adulteration with chicory) has risen from one ounce and a tenth per head in 1801 to twenty-eight ounces in 1849; tea from 19 oz. to 23 oz.; sugar from 15 lbs., which it was in 1821, to 24 lbs. in 1849, against 22½ lbs. in 1801.

Now it needs no elaborate argument to show, that increased cheapness of the principal necessities of life must redound to the essential benefit of the poorest and most numerous section of the community. Of

such articles as bread, sugar, coffee, calico, and linen, the wealthy and easy classes will always allow themselves as much as they desire or need; and a reduction in price will seldom induce them, as individuals (apart, that is, from their servants and household), to increase their consumption. It allows them, indeed, a larger surplus to spend on luxuries or elegancies: but that is the sum of its benefit to them: to the poor it makes all the difference of a scanty or an ample meal, of warm or insufficient clothing, of an anxious or a care-free mind, of a vigorous and healthy or a pining and sickly family. Mr. Johnston, indeed, seems disposed to deny these conclusions, and has made a curious discovery. "If the labourer," says he (vol. i. p. 136.), "were more a consumer than a producer, this cheapening of the produce of labour would be a prudent policy; but as the labourer is more a producer than a consumer, the policy is manifestly inimical to his interests."

As this is a fallacy which, though not often so clearly expressed, is at the root of many of the notions and feelings of conservatives and protectionists, it may be worth while to spend a few sentences upon it, though it has been already frequently exposed. In what way is the labourer—in what way can he be—more a producer than a consumer? Is he not a consumer *par excellence*? Is not a larger proportion of his total income expended in articles of consumption than is the case with any other class? The middle class man purchases out of his earnings books for his library, ornaments for his chimney-piece, railway certificates for the investment of his savings. The nobleman spends half his income in foreign tours, in costly pictures, in vast conservatories, in strange exotics. The poor man spends *all* his income in food, in clothing, or in rent. How should he not be more benefited than any other, when these are cheap and plentiful? "Because," says Mr. Johnston, "he is himself the producer of them."

Here lies the fallacy. In what sense, producer? When a poor man is working on his own account and not for wages, he is owner of the article which he produces, and it is in his character of owner, and not as the instrument of production, that he has a direct interest in its price. Suppose him to be a maker of calico, and that calico and all other articles fall equally. He makes and *sells* calico; but he *purchases* hats, shoes, bread, bacon, sugar, and tea. He exchanges a piece of cheap calico against cheap hats, cheap bread, cheap sugar; instead of exchanging a piece of dear calico against dear hats, dear bread, dear sugar: this is the most favourable statement of the case for Mr. Johnston's theory. Yet, even on this statement, cheapness could be no "imprudent policy" for the poor man, since, in both cases, he exchanges what have been *his whole earnings for his whole expenditure*; and a man who does this can never be more a producer than a consumer. But take the case of a poor man working for wages. The only way in which the cheapness of the article he produces can be a disadvantage to him, is in the degree to which his wages are affected by it. We will not stop to inquire at present, whether the employer of manufacturing labour or of agricultural is most likely, under a general fall of prices, to be able to meet the fall in the article which he produces without a reduction in the money wages of his labour. The question before us, on a comparison of prices and wages, is one of fact. Have the wages of the labourer fallen, *pari passu*, with the price of the article at which he labours or of the main articles of his consumption? Now, will any one pretend to say that this has been the case? Have the wages of the agricultural peasant fallen in the proportion of 83 to 53? Have the wages, of the calico weaver fallen in the proportion of 28 to 6? Have the wages of either of them fallen in the propor-

tion of tea, coffee, or sugar? Is there any ground for believing that their wages have fallen at all? Let us inquire a little into this.

We admit at once that this is a point on which we cannot speak with the authoritativeness of distinct and positive knowledge: neither can our opponents. We have our strong convictions as they may have theirs; but neither we nor they have any documents by which we can force others to adopt them. The inquiry into the relative earnings of different trades and occupations in this and the last generation is one of singular difficulty, and one respecting the results of which those who have taken the most pains with it will speak with the most diffidence. We have examined all the information which Mr. M'Culloch and Mr. Porter have been able to collect, and all which we ourselves have been able, from various sources, to bring to bear upon the question; and we avow ourselves quite unprepared to speak dogmatically. The following, we believe to be the truth:—The wages of agricultural labour have fluctuated greatly at different times, and even now vary immensely in different counties, and for different qualifications; but we question whether any general change has taken place either for better or worse. There is no rule respecting them. There are districts where the earnings are only 7s. a week; there are others where they are 12s.; some where they are 15s.; and we have heard of cases where a first-rate ploughman or thresher received 20s., and where the farmer said it answered to him to pay this. There are certain occupations in which wages have fallen from special causes,—as that of the hand-loom weavers, where ignorance, want of enterprise, and love of a domestic occupation have combined to induce them to continue a hopeless competition against improved machinery;—as that of the tailors, deranged in some degree, some

years since, by the consequences of foolish and unwarrantable strikes, but affected seriously, we believe, only in the case of show shops and the like;—as that of bad needlework, where the ease and collateral advantages of the employment have tempted into it excessive numbers. With these exceptions, we believe that the wages of labour—*i. e.* the amount earnable in a given number of hours—have rather risen than fallen during the last fifty years. So much for our belief,—which, perhaps, may be worth no more than the belief of others. The following, however, are facts; and comprise, we believe, all the actual information extant, and to be relied on. Mr. Porter has ascertained from the Tables kept at Greenwich Hospital, that the wages of *carpenters* had risen from 18*s.* a week in 1800, to 29*s.* 3*d.* in 1836;—of *bricklayers*, from 18*s.* to 26*s.* 9*d.*;—of *plumbers* from 19*s.* to 30*s.* In the same period the earnings of *London compositors* in the book trade had risen from 33*s.* to 36*s.*: we have ascertained that they remain the same. The earnings of compositors employed on the morning Papers had risen from 40*s.* to 48*s.* a week: they are now at the latter amount. From evidence published by a Committee of the House of Commons in 1833, added to such information as we have been enabled to obtain up to the present period, we give, as fully reliable, the following table of the earnings of a spinner of cotton yarn, No. 200—at these several dates.

		Weekly net Earning.		Pounds of Flour these would purchase.	Pounds of Flesh Meat these would purchase.	Hours of Work.
		<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>			
In the year	1804	32	6	117	62	74
„	1833	42	9	267	85	69
„	1850	40	0	320	85	60

In this case we see that in a trade more exposed than almost any other to severity of competition, a gradual rise of wages has been accompanied by a gradual reduction in the hours of labour, and a gradual, but decided, fall in the price of food. These, we believe, comprise all the facts known and to be trusted; and assuredly they fully make good our position.

Mr. Johnston returns to the charge (vol. i. p. 136.) thus:—"The working classes have allowed themselves to be made the instrument of the middle orders or men of business, and have been led away by the delusion of accomplishing political changes, from which practically *they* could derive no advantage."—Is this true? Have they derived no advantage from the political changes which have taken place during the last twenty years? Has parliamentary reform led to the remission of no taxation which pressed heavily upon them? Has commercial reform, rendered possible only by the great Act of 1832, brought no addition to their comforts, no plenty to their hearths, no spring to their industry, no demand for their productions? In what state would they have been, if our exports in 1850 had been the same as our exports in 1840? Has municipal reform relieved them from no burdens and no injustice? Have the county courts afforded them no facility for the recovery of their small debts? Has the increasing attention now paid to those sanatory arrangements which peculiarly concern the poor, no connection with the augmentation of the popular element in our government consequent upon parliamentary reform? Is the vast improvement which has taken place in the schools for the working classes in no degree traceable to the same influence? Has not, in fact, the whole of our legislation for the last fifteen years been marked above all other characteristics by attention to the wants, interests, and comforts of the poor? Let Mr. Johnston look at our

fiscal legislation alone, and blush for the injustice of his charge.

It is scarcely too much to say, that since 1830 the chief occupation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer has been the removal or reduction of taxes which pressed upon the mass of the people. We know how distasteful figures generally are both to hearers and readers, and we shall therefore be merciful in our use of them; but, we have collected a few which are too speaking to be withheld. Since the peace in 1815 (leaving out that year), we have repealed, up to 1846, taxes which produced annually 53,046,000*l.*; and we have imposed taxes to the amount of 13,496,000*l.*; leaving a clear balance of relief to the country of 39,550,000*l.* a year. From 1830 to 1850, 21,568,000*l.* of taxes have been repealed, and 7,925,000*l.* imposed, showing a relief to the country since that period of not less than 13,643,000*l.* But these figures, though showing the extent to which the country has been eased, give a very inadequate conception of the extent to which the working classes have participated in that relief. Of the 7,925,000*l.* of taxation imposed since 1830, 5,100,000*l.* is furnished by the income-tax, from which they are wholly exempted. In 1830, there were taxes on all the raw materials of our industry; *now*, all these come in free. In 1830, there was a prohibitory duty on foreign grain, foreign meat was excluded, and heavy customs' duties were levied on all imported articles of food. *Now* corn comes in free; butchers'-meat comes in free; the duty on colonial coffee has been reduced from 9*d.* and 6*d.* per lb. to 4*d.*; the duty on foreign sugar was prohibitory, it is now 15*s.* 6*d.* a cwt.; the duty on colonial sugar was 24*s.* a cwt., it is now 11*s.* In 1830, the poor man's letter cost him from 6*d.* to 13½*d.*, he now gets it from the furthest extremity of the island for a penny. In fact, with the single exception of soap, *no tax is now levied on*

any one of the necessities of life ; and if a working man chooses to confine himself to these, he may escape taxation altogether. Whatever he contributes to the revenue is a purely voluntary contribution. If he confines himself to a strictly wholesome and nutritious diet, and to an ample supply of neat and comfortable clothing,—if he is content, as so many of the best, and wisest, and strongest, and longest-lived men have been before him, to live on bread and meat and milk and butter, and to drink only water ; to clothe himself in woollen, linen, and cotton ; to forego the pleasant luxuries of sugar, coffee, and tea, and to eschew the noxious ones of wine, beer, spirits, and tobacco,—he may pass through life without ever paying one shilling of taxation, except for the soap he requires for washing—an exception which is not likely to remain long upon our statute-book. Of what other country in the world can the same be said ? The discontented, the factious, and the agitating still go about, telling the working man that he, the heavily-taxed Englishman, cannot compete with the lightly-taxed foreigner ; speaking, as they might have been justified in some respects in speaking in 1800, or in 1815, or in 1829 ; using language which may have been true then, but which is simply false now. But in a work like Mr. Johnston's, carefully prepared for the press, such unfairness and unveracity should, in common decency, have been avoided. In no country in Europe is the peasant and artisan so free from all enforced taxation as in England. The French peasant pays a salt-tax, a *contribution personnelle et mobilière* ; a licence-tax ; and, if he live in a town, the vexatious and burdensome *octroi*. The German labouring man pays a poll-tax, a class-tax, a trade-tax, and sometimes a meat-tax ; and in certain parts an *octroi* also. *The English working-man pays no direct taxes whatever*. He is taxed only for his luxuries ; he pays only on the pleasures of the

palate; if he chooses to dispense with luxuries, none of which are essential and few of which are harmless, he dispenses with taxation too; if, on the contrary, he chooses to smoke his pipe and drink his glass, to sip tea from China, and sweeten it with sugar from Jamaica, he at once puts himself into the category of the rich, who can afford these superfluities; *he voluntarily steps into the tax-paying class*, and forfeits all title to sue or to complain *in formâ pauperis*. We are far from wishing to intimate that he should not indulge in all harmless luxuries to the utmost limit that he can afford; but most indisputably, in thus leaving it optional with him whether he will contribute to the revenue or not—and subjecting him to no actual privations if he decline to do so—Parliament is favouring him to an extent which it vouchsafes to no other class in the community, and to which no other land affords a parallel. His earnings are decimated by no income-tax, like those of the clerk; his cottage is subject to no window-tax, like that of the struggling professional aspirant; very generally he does not even contribute to the poor-rate;—he pays, like the rich man, to the state only when he chooses to imitate the rich man in his living.

In a very valuable paper, read by Mr. Porter before the British Association in August 1851, on “The self-imposed Taxation of the Working Classes,” he shows in a very striking manner how far less liberally they are treated by themselves than by the government which their advocates so unfairly accuse of neglect and injustice. He there clearly proves that the working classes tax themselves every year, in three needless and noxious articles alone, to an extent equal to the whole yearly revenue of the kingdom; these articles, too, (which is the worst and most selfish feature of the case,) being consumed almost entirely by the heads of families, to the exclusion of their wives and children. Mr. Porter,

after a careful calculation, in which all exaggeration is anxiously eliminated, gives us the yearly expenditure of the people in the items of British and Colonial spirits, beer and porter, tobacco and snuff; leaving out brandy, as mainly used by the rich; leaving out all beer brewed in private families; leaving out English-made cigars, and all foreign manufactured tobacco, which is chiefly the higher priced snuff and Havannah cigars, not used by the poor. The sum total is as follows:—

Rum, gin, and whiskey	-	-	-	£20,810,208
Beer and porter -	-	-	-	25,383,165
Tobacco and snuff	-	-	-	7,218,242
				<u>£53,411,615</u>

Let those who speak of working men as an oppressed, impoverished, and extortionised class, reflect what a magical change in their condition a very few years would effect were this vast sum, thus worse than thrown away, either expended in adding to their comforts, or laid by to raise them into the class of capitalists, whom they so much envy and thoughtlessly malign.

“Vast as has been the increase of the national wealth of late years, its distribution has been far less satisfactory.” So avers Mr. Johnston. “Property is more and more coagulating into large masses. The rich are becoming richer, and the poor poorer. No class of politicians denies this.”—We deny it *in toto*: there is no evidence to support the assertion; and, thanks to Mr. Porter’s industry and research, there is considerable evidence to disprove it. It is obvious that when the savings of the working classes—the sums they accumulate and lay by—are increasing, it cannot be said, with any truth, that the poor are becoming poorer. Now, we have no means of knowing, with any certainty, what the total amount of these savings are, because so large a portion of them are in the hands of friendly societies and Odd

Fellows' clubs, of whose investments no summary is published. We only know that they are largely increasing. The number of these friendly societies registered was, in 1846, not less than 10,995; and the amount deposited by them in savings' banks, and directly in the hands of the National Debt Commissioners, was 3,301,560*l*. In 1849, in spite of the severe pressure and high prices of 1847 and 1848, this sum had increased to 3,356,000*l*. This, however, by no means comprises the whole.—Mr. M'Culloch informs us that, in 1815, these societies were said to have numbered 925,429 members. If this be correct, they must now, he says, reach 1,200,000. But leaving these figures, over which some doubt may be thrown, let us come to Savings' Banks, where we have official documents to rely upon. In England, Wales, and Ireland, the depositors, who numbered 412,217 in 1830, had increased to 970,825 in 1848; and the amount deposited had sprung up from 13,507,568*l*. to 27,034,026*l*. The following will show the increase in the deposits as compared with the population, for England, Wales, and Ireland. In Scotland, owing to the greater facilities and the more liberal interest afforded by the ordinary banks, savings' banks have not till recently been much used.

		<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>	
In 1831 the amount deposited was		12	8	per head.
1836	„ „	16	4	„
1841	„ „	19	10	„
1846	„ „	24	0	„

In 1848, the amount had fallen off to 20*s.* 11*d.*, owing to the distress occasioned by the potato-rot, and the high price of provisions: it has since again increased.

It is, however, sometimes asserted that the bulk of depositors in these institutions do not belong, properly speaking, to the working classes, but are composed of domestic servants and small tradesmen. As regards

friendly societies this assertion is certainly not true: as regards savings' banks we cannot speak so decidedly, since the callings of the depositors are not regularly classified and published. But we have lying before us a return from the Manchester and Salford Savings' Bank, in 1842—from which it appears that out of 14,937 depositors, 3,063 were domestic servants, 3,033 children, whose parents had invested money for them, only 2,372 tradesmen, clerks, warehousemen, porters, artists, and professional teachers, and the remainder were labourers and handicraftsmen in various branches of industry.

The official accounts of the dividends paid to fundholders afford much valuable information, strongly controverting the idea of the present tendency of property to concentrate itself into few hands. They show that while the larger fundholders are diminishing, the smaller are increasing. More persons hold to the half-yearly value of 5*l.*, fewer to the half-yearly value of 500*l.*

Fundholders receiving at each Payment.	1831.	1848.	Increase per Cent.	Diminution per Cent.
£				
Not exceeding 5	88,170	96,415	9·35	
” 10	44,790	44,937	0·33	
” 50	98,320	96,024	- -	2·33
” 100	25,694	24,462	- -	4·79
” 200	14,772	13,882	- -	6·02
” 300	4,527	4,032	- -	10·93
” 500	2,890	2,647	- -	8·41
” 1000	1,398	1,222	- -	12·59
” 2000	412	328	- -	20·38
Exceeding 2000	172	177	2·90	
	281,145	284,127		

The increase in the last item is caused by the insurance offices, which invest largely in the funds.

The income-tax returns lead to a similar conclusion: the smaller incomes have increased faster than the larger.

While the number assessed between 150*l.* and 500*l.* have increased between 1812 and 1848, 196 per cent.; those assessed upwards of 500*l.* have increased only 147 per cent. The probate duty lists give the same result. Between 1833 and 1848

	Per Cent.
The amount assessed on estates up to £1,500 had increased	15·56
„ „ between £1,500 and £5,000 „	9·21
„ „ „ £5,000 and £10,000 „	16·38
„ „ „ £10,000 and £15,000 „	6·36
„ „ of upwards of £15,000 „	7·20

While the amount of duty received on estates of 30,000*l.* and upwards has been steadily though slowly decreasing.

Driven from all these lugubrious and malcontent positions, Mr. Johnston takes refuge in the assertion that, in spite of wealth, in spite of civilisation, in spite of education, the moral condition of the people of England has retrograded in recent years. We will not now follow him through all the details he brings forward in proof of his statement. We will give one as a sample of the rest. He affirms, first, (vol. ii. p. 247.) as a matter which has fallen under his personal observation, that the greatest curse and source of crime and degradation among the labouring classes of England is drunkenness; and secondly, that this vice is on the increase, and “that from whatever cause, the consumption of ardent spirits has far from diminished.”—We admit his first assertion: we entirely deny the second. The decrease of habits of drinking among the middle and higher classes has long been matter of notoriety and of congratulation. Mr. McCulloch states the average consumption of wine in the United Kingdom to have fallen since the close of the last century from *three* bottles a man to *one and one-third*; and from the last returns published we deduce the following figures:—

Per Head.				
From 1795—1804	we consumed	0·52	gallons of wine	a year.
1821—1824	„	0·22	„	„
in 1842	„	0·18	„	„
in 1849	„	0·22	„	„

This is a most satisfactory result; but it is not generally known that the official documents relating to the consumption of beer and ardent spirits show one not less satisfactory with regard to the increasing temperance of the poor. For the first quarter of this century the high duties on British spirits caused such an enormous amount of illicit distillation that no comparison can be instituted with that period. Since 1830 the following table shows the annual consumption per head in the kingdom.

	1831.	1841.	1849.
British Spirits drunk per head	·90	·77	·84
Colonial - - - -	·15	·09	·11
Foreign - - - -	·05	·04	·08
	<u>1·10</u>	<u>·90</u>	<u>1·03</u>

The following table is still more clear and satisfactory, as showing that there has been a large and, on the whole, a continuous decrease in the use of ardent spirits in England and Ireland, and that the sole increase has been in Scotland.

Home made Spirits charged with Duty.	1831.	1836.	1843.	1846.	1849.
	Gallons.	Gallons.	Gallons.	Gallons.	Gallons.
England -	7,732,000	7,875,000	7,720,000	5,634,000	5,318,000
Scotland -	6,007,000	6,621,000	5,593,000	9,560,000	10,445,000
Ireland -	9,004,000	12,249,000	5,546,000	8,333,000	8,117,000
U. Kingdom	<u>22,743,000</u>	<u>26,745,000</u>	<u>18,859,000</u>	<u>23,527,000</u>	<u>23,880,000</u>

The diminution in the consumption of malt liquor appears to have kept pace with that in the use of spirits.

In 1830 the beer duty was taken off, and a great increase in the number of licences was the result. The beer shops increased till 1838, when they reached their maximum. Since that time they have steadily declined. The licences granted in that year were 45,717, or one for every 566 persons; in 1849, they were 38,200, or one for every 720 persons.

Consumption per Head in the United Kingdom.	British Spirits, Gallons.	Bushels of Malt.
In the year 1831 -	·90	1·63
„ 1841 -	·77	1·35
„ 1849 -	·84	1·32

It will be allowed, we think, that these figures effectually dispose of Mr. Johnston's rash assertion as to the increase in the consumption of intoxicating liquors among our increasing population.

We trust that the picture we have drawn of the undeniable improvement of our population as a whole, and of our progress in all the departments of national well-being, will not be held to indicate want of knowledge of the amount of social suffering which still exists, nor want of the deepest sympathy with the sufferers. We are fully cognisant of the existence in our great towns of a class of beings *below* the working classes, permanently and almost hopelessly degraded. We are not blind to the pressure, the privation, the penury, the occasional starvation, even, prevalent among many craftsmen, especially, perhaps, among sempstresses and tailors. We admit and deplore the depressed and impoverished condition of the agricultural labourers over many parts of England; and we look upon this feature in the social state of England with almost more anxiety than any other, because, more than any other, an air of wretchedness and of inability to rise would here appear

to be characteristic of a whole section of our population. But we do not dwell upon these painful facts here, not from wishing to ignore them, nor from feeling them to be irreconcilable with our theory of progress, but because—unless they can be shown to spring out of our advancing civilisation, or to prevail now to a greater degree than formerly—they are, in our controversy with the asserters of our national decay, to a great extent irrelevant considerations. The existence of wide-spread distress is undoubtedly a proof that our civilisation is imperfect, and our social system incomplete; but that this distress is more extensive or more severe than it has been, will not, we think, be deliberately held by any one who is aware how similar complaints, as angry and unmeasured, stretch back through the whole half century; how much more sensitive to suffering, how much more quick to detect and prompt to pity misery, the public mind has of late years become; and how many phases of wretchedness formerly hidden in secrecy and silence are now made known through a thousand channels. If there are among us any classes whose inability to live in comfort or to rise out of their bondage is justly chargeable upon the arrangements of society, this is an impeachment of our civilisation, and a fatal flaw in the structure of our political community. But if, as we believe, all these cases of misery and degradation—where they are not those casual exceptions which must always exist in human, and therefore imperfect, societies—are distinctly traceable to the former neglect of natural laws which are now beginning to be studied and obeyed, and to a violation, by the last generation, of principles which have been taken as the guide and the pole-star of the present,—then this impeachment can no longer be justly sustained. It is the law of nature that children should suffer for their father's faults: it is the law of nature that indolence, improvidence, recklessness,

and folly should entail suffering and degradation; and it is no just ground for the condemnation of our social arrangements that they carry out this law; nor any argument against the progress of an age that the action of this law is legibly written on its face. If, indeed, (in any but exceptional instances, which no system can ever meet,) the industrious, the frugal, and the foreseeing—whose parents before them were industrious, frugal, and foreseeing also—not only cannot maintain their position or rise above it, but are sinking lower and lower in spite of their exertions, then the construction of society is somehow, somewhere, in fault, and our boasted progress is a mistake and mockery. But who will affirm such cases to exist except as rare anomalies?

One remark more, and we will quit this branch of the subject. Much has been written of late respecting the privations of the 30,000 needlewomen and the 23,000 tailors of the metropolis, and of the destitution and squalor of the peasants in rural districts: shocking individual pictures have been drawn of the sufferings of these classes; and, exaggerated as some of them may have been in tone and colouring, we do not deny their truth in the main. They are true as scenes; are they true as general delineations? Are they *specimens*, or *exceptions*? How deep do these miseries go? Are they characteristic of a class, or only of individuals of that class? There is, moreover, one weighty consideration entirely left out of view by those who draw rapid generalisations from these harrowing descriptions, which we can only just indicate here. *How small a redundancy of numbers in any branch of industry will suffice to give to that branch the appearance, and even, for the time, to cause the reality, of general distress?* If, in the cotton trade, there is regular employment, at ample wages, for 50,000 spinners, and 50,500 are seeking for work, though it be only this extra *one per*

cent., who are properly speaking destitute or in distress, they may easily succeed not only in actually making the other ninety-nine sharers in their privations, but in giving a general character of destitution and *unemployedness* to the whole class. If there are 31,000 needlewomen in London, and only 30,000 are wanted, the surplus thousand, by their competition, their complaints, their undeniable destitution, will inevitably produce on the superficial observer the impression of starvation and inadequate employment pervading the whole denomination. Apply these remarks to the clothing trades. Now, if we are right in this, with what justice can sufferings of this character be urged to show that society is retrograding or out of joint? How can privations, however sad, however clamorous for cure, resulting from the surplus of a few thousands—and *properly belonging only to those few*—be adduced in disproof of the progress and increasing comfort of a population of 20,000,000?

The excessive toil required in nearly every occupation—the severity of the struggle for existence—the strain upon the powers of every man who runs the race of life in this land and age of high excitement,—Mr. Johnston regards as a great counter-indication to the idea of progress. Unquestionably it is a great drawback, and a sore evil. But it is by no means confined to the lower orders. Throughout the whole community we are all called to labour too early and compelled to labour too severely and too long. We live sadly too fast. Our existence, in nearly all ranks, is a crush, a struggle, and a strife. Immensely as the field of lucrative employment has been enlarged, it is still too limited for the numbers that crowd into it. The evil is not peculiar to the peasant or the handicraftsman—perhaps even it is not most severely felt

by him. The lawyer, the statesman, the student, the artist, the merchant, all groan under the pressure. All who work at all are overworked. Some have more to do than they can do without sacrificing the enjoyments, the amenities, and all the higher objects of existence: others can scarcely find work enough to enable them to keep body and soul together. No one can be more keenly alive than we are to all that is regrettable in such a state of things. But we doubt whether the mischief is increasing: we know that many efforts are making to diminish it; that some progress has already been achieved in this direction; and that while the evil is felt and admitted, we are also beginning to perceive in what quarter its eradication must be sought. Shorter hours of labour have already been enforced in factories; among tradesmen, and shopmen, and milliners there is a popular movement supported by an organisation of considerable extent, called "The Short-time Movement;" and in the legal, and we believe in the medical profession likewise, employment is more diffused and less monopolised by a few than was the case a few years ago. The Committee of the House of Commons which sat last session to inquire into official salaries, elicited some valuable information on this subject from the then Attorney-General, and other leading counsel, to the effect that owing to the establishment of County Courts and other legal arrangements, many more barristers are employed now than formerly; and that while there are fewer colossal fortunes made at the bar, there are a greater number of lawyers in the receipt of moderate professional incomes.

Further progress in the cure of this pervading malady must be sought in the diffusion of simpler habits and more moderate and rational desires; in sounder views of the objects of life, and a juster estimate of the

elements of true enjoyment; in the stronger development of individual volition, and in a growing emancipation from senseless and tyrannical conventionalities. To enable us all to work less intently and less incessantly, it is only necessary that we should be content to live more humbly and be satisfied with less: we must all alike purchase leisure by frugality, and by contentment with a lowlier and less ambitious lot than we have hitherto striven after. This is the only coin by which the pearl of great price can be bought. The labourer who aspires after continental ease must be satisfied with the privations and parsimony of continental living; the merchant must be content to purchase the delights of domestic society and unanxious nights at the price of dying fifty thousand pounds poorer than he once expected; the physician or the lawyer, if he cannot easily refuse the practice which flows in upon him in such overwhelming abundance, can at least, by limiting his desires to the accumulation of a more modest fortune, retire earlier from the struggle, and devolve his business upon his less successful brethren. If we could all be suddenly endowed with wisdom to perceive how few of the worthier objects of earthly existence require wealth for their attainment, — how truly all the real happiness, even of refined and intellectual life, is within the reach of an easily-acquired competence, — how seldom the rich are free, even in the expenditure of their riches; — how generally — how almost universally — the affluent are compelled to lay out their envied wealth, not in adding one iota to their own enjoyment, but in obedience to the tyrannical dictation of the world in which they live *, — we should discover that the excessive toil and the severe struggle

* The late Lord Dudley used to observe that, "the only real competence was to have 10,000*l.* a year, and for the world to believe that you had only 5000*l.* You would then have 5000*l.* for yourself."

of life which we all unite to deprecate and deplore, is, in truth, a self-imposed necessity, — like the taxation of the poor. If the English people could all at once be induced to lay aside their luxurious, wasteful, and showy mode of life, and adopt the frugality and temperance of the Spaniards, the simple habits of the Tyrolese, and the unostentatious hospitality of the Syrians, how few among us would not find a superfluity at their disposal!

We rejoice to believe that this more rational and homely spirit is spreading among us, especially in detached localities; and we do not think that a good citizen could render any more valuable service to his country than in promoting it, by argument and example, wherever his influence extends.

It is, however, incumbent upon those who, by a shorter process than that of national enlightenment, would bring about less strenuous exertion and shorter hours of labour in all industrial occupations, to consider what the attainment of their purpose signifies, and would involve. Less labour signifies less produce: shorter hours of work mean a diminution in the quantity of all those articles of necessity and comfort which work creates. The Provisional Government of France, after the last Revolution, issued a decree reducing the hours of daily labour by one-third; but they soon found, by actual results, what a fatal and shallow blunder they had made, looking to the object they had in view. If the peasant works eight hours instead of ten, he has so many fewer quarters of wheat to exchange with the artisan; if the weaver works eight hours instead of ten, he has so many fewer shirts or coats to exchange against the bread of the agricultural labourer; there is less food and less clothing for the community at large; all articles rise in price, and therefore none of the producers benefit by the advance, while society, as a whole, is worse provided than before. We are far from saying

that the leisure thus purchased may not be well worth its cost; but we must not imagine that it can be had for nothing, or that it can be obtained at any cheaper rate. It is only by being, as a nation, contented with less, that we can safely venture to take measures for producing less. If we diminish labour, we must put up with diminished supplies; unless, indeed, we can employ our labour on more fertile and productive fields.

Yes!—say the votaries of “organisation,”—there is a third alternative. In general we work too much—but there are many among us who do not work at all: set the idle to work. Alas! this expedient would go but a small way towards meeting the difficulty. How many unemployed are there in Great Britain? and what proportion do they bear to the total population, the great mass of whom are alleged to be overworked?—Among the middle classes there are some, among the higher there are many, who do nothing. But how infinitesimal a proportion do these form of 20,000,000? In the manufacturing districts we hear of few unemployed artisans; and in the metropolis the complaint is of the multitude of the overworked, not of the idle. In the agricultural districts even, the number of able-bodied unemployed is small and diminishing. The number of adults so described was, on January 1. 1849, 201,644; in 1850, 170,502; in 1851, 154,525. It is pretty certain that if all the unemployed in all ranks were set to work, they would not relieve the overworked to the extent of half an hour a day. If, indeed, as some have suggested, all who are occupied in supplying the ornaments and luxuries of life were to be employed in producing necessities, the result might be very different; but this would have serious evils of its own; and be of use only as far as it should bring us back to the remedy we have shown to be the true one,—simpler and more frugal habits diffused through the community.

Mr. Johnston devotes a careful chapter to the examination of the Criminal Returns for the last fifteen years ; and seems strongly disposed to draw from them an augury favourable to his notions of the deterioration of our social state. Except, however, in the single and very painful instance of the increase of murders, which cannot be gainsaid, we do not see that his statistics bear out his impressions. A comparison of the total commitments for various classes of offences during the last fifteen years, gives the following results.

Nature of Offences.	Five Years ending 1839.	Five Years ending 1844.	Five Years ending 1849.	Increase per Cent. between First and Last Period.
Murder - - -	315	347	365	15·8
Attempts to murder and manslaughter - -	1,763	2,210	2,153	22·1
Total offences against the person - -	9,559	10,885	10,318	8·
Violent and malicious offences against pro- perty - - -	7,666	11,340	8,958	16·8
Simple ditto - -	90,172	113,047	111,804	24·
Total of all commitments	112,864	142,389	136,408	20·8
Yearly average - -	22,573	28,478	27,282	20·8

Now, notwithstanding the marked *decrease* in all offences except murder between 1844 and 1849 ; notwithstanding, also, the consideration that, against an increase between the first and last periods here given for comparison (an increase varying from eight to twenty-four per cent.), there has to be set an increase of population amounting to fourteen per cent. ; still we are quite ready to confess, that, at first sight, the result presented is the reverse of satisfactory. But there are two or three considerations which, when duly weighed, will do much to mitigate our disappointment. And,

first, let us inquire into the relative heinousness of the offences committed in these three periods, as indicated by the severity of the sentences passed upon them by the judges. Many crimes necessarily classed together under the same general denomination may be marked by very different degrees of guilt; and, where no material change has taken place in our penal laws, between the periods to be compared, we do not know that any fairer estimate can be obtained of the relative enormity of crimes than that afforded by the view taken of them by those who were judicially cognisant of all the circumstances attending their commission.

Sentences.	Five Years ending 1839.	Five Years ending 1844.	Five Years ending 1849.	Increase per Cent. since 1839.	Decrease per Cent. since 1839.
Death - -	1,627	368	282	-	82
Transportation for more than 15 years -	2,646	1,162	493	-	81
Tr. from 7 to 15	5,087	9,766	6,173	21	
Tr. for 7 years -	10,864	15,110	12,668	17	
Imprisonment above 2 years	72	76	15	-	80
Im. above 1 year	1,775	2,395	2,208	24	
Im. 1 year and under - -	56,341	77,501	81,979	45	

Thus it appears that while the offences judged worthy of death and transportation for life have diminished since 1839, 81 per cent.; and those judged worthy of shorter terms of exile have increased somewhat faster than the population, the vast increase which has taken place has been in those offences punishable by a year's imprisonment, or even less. A comparison between the last five years and the five years immediately preceding, shows a diminution in all offences except those visited with the mildest penalties.

There are, however, other circumstances which render

the increase or diminution of committals for crime a very inadequate and often deceptive criterion of the moral progress of the community. In the first place, the varying skill and activity of the police will go far to modify any conclusions we might draw from criminal returns. An increase in the number of committals is often only an indication of a better system of detection. The number of offenders brought to justice is often no more complete or accurate test of the number of offences committed, than is the number of fish caught of the number swimming in the river. If every year a larger proportion of existing criminals be not brought to light, our police cannot be improving as it ought. It is, therefore, obvious that an increase in the crimes made known may easily co-exist with an actual decrease in the crimes committed. In the second place—and this is a point to which we wish to call special attention—*crime is, for the most part, committed, not by the community at large, but by a peculiar and distinct section of it.* A great portion of the crimes of violence, and most of the crimes of fraud, are due to *professional* criminals; and an increase of offences indicates rather increased activity in this criminal population, or increased facility for their depredations, or, at most, an increase in their numbers, than any augmented criminality on the part of society in general. The inmates of our gaols, the culprits in our docks, belong habitually, in an overwhelming proportion, to a *class apart*, a class whose occupation and livelihood are found in the commission of offences; who are compelled to this trade because they know no other, and because no other is in vogue among the people with whom their lot is cast; and who are in many cases trained to it as regularly as others are trained to weaving, to ploughing, or to tailoring. The increase of crime, therefore, generally bespeaks, on the worst supposition, an increase of the criminal popu-

lation; and in no degree militates against the idea of the progress of morality and civilisation among all other classes, though it shows, with painful distinctness and with startling emphasis, that society has not succeeded in removing the motives which stimulate to a criminal career, or in redeeming and absorbing those classes from which the criminal population is recruited. While it is one of the beneficial effects of a good police, to separate more and more the light from the darkness, our swollen return of crime is undoubtedly a blot upon our escutcheon and a drawback on our progress; not as impeaching the general honesty and virtue of the nation, but as showing the existence of a class among us which the advance of civilisation ought to have eradicated or suppressed.

These reflections may suggest an explanation of the mistake both of those who, finding the great majority of criminals to be uneducated, conceive that their criminality is due to their ignorance, and will be removed by their instruction; and of those, also, who, finding no regular and steady ratio (or only an inverse one) between the spread of education and the decrease of crime, infer that instruction is not an efficient ally of morality or a natural antagonist to crime. The criminality of the inmates of our gaols and convict ships, though found in almost invariable concomitance with ignorance, does not spring from it; but the concomitance is to be explained by the reflection that absence of all proper training and instruction is only one of the many characteristics of the class in which habitual and professional criminals are found. No education will eradicate their criminality unless it should raise them out of the class from which they have sprung, or otherwise alter the surrounding circumstances which hem them in, and point their course with an imperious and overpowering hand. Also, under these circumstances, it is evident

that no national education, however improved in its quality, or excellent in its direct results, can be reasonably expected to produce any decisive effect upon our criminal returns, as long as it stops short of our professional criminal population. Crime cannot be diminished by any moral influence bearing only upon the non-criminal classes.

Another count of Mr. Johnston's indictment against the present age is the want of cordial and kindly intercourse between different ranks:—

“The separation between rich and poor—the dissympathy and isolation of classes,—is the great social evil of the time. Institutions for scientific and literary teaching by lectures, at the cheapest possible rates, are established; parks for the recreation of the lower orders are planted; even clubs, upon something like the aristocratic model, where conveniences and luxuries are supplied at low prices; but all this seems to be unsuccessful. What one wants to see—a mutual and hearty recognition of the differences of condition, a kind and cordial condescension on the one side, and an equally cordial, but still respectful, devotedness, on the other—appears to make no progress.”—Vol. i. p. 131.

This is a common and natural, but we think an inconsiderate complaint. It is “a longing, lingering look behind,” cast after the characteristics of an era that has passed away. It is the hankering which pervades the Young-England party. It is the secret regret indulged in by the more amiable portion of our aristocracy. The truth is, that that kind of friendly intercourse between the higher and lower orders—seductive as we feel it to be in description—beautiful and touching as it often was in reality—belonged to feudalism, and is simply impracticable and incongruous in a democratic age. It arose from and depended upon a relative position of the two classes which no longer exists. It could not be ingrafted on their present relations. The theory of

generous protection on the one side, and grateful and affectionate dependence on the other, can no longer form the basis on which the social hierarchy rests. If still cherished among the aristocratic rich, it is repudiated by the labouring poor; and if the former were to attempt to act it out, they would be met by ridicule, repulsion, and rebellion, from the latter. To explain fully the nature of the change in the relations of the two parties, and the precise point in the change which English society has now reached, would require us to copy whole pages from Mill's philosophic chapter on "The Probable Future of the Working Classes," and from the fourth volume of Tocqueville's "Democracy in America." The error of those who thus seek to recall the attachments and sympathies of feudalism "lies in not perceiving that these virtues and sentiments, like the clanship and hospitality of the wandering Arab, belong emphatically to a rude and imperfect state of the social union. We have entered into a state of civilisation in which the bond that attaches human beings to one another must be disinterested admiration and sympathy for personal qualities, or gratitude for unselfish services—not the emotions of protectors towards dependents, or of dependents towards protectors. Of the working classes of Western Europe, at least, it may be pronounced certain that the patriarchal or paternal system of government is one to which they will not again be subject. They have taken their interests into their own hands."*

The unsatisfactory nature of the intercourse now subsisting between rich and poor arises mainly from the fact of the relations between them being in a state of transition; neither of the two parties having altogether discarded the old ideas, nor wholly embraced

* Mill's Political Economy, vol. ii. p. 317.

and comprehended the new. Both are still somewhat under the influence of feudal associations ; and confound in their minds the rights and duties of the past relation, with those of the relation which has superseded it. The bond between the two classes, and their mutual obligations, are as clear and imperative as ever ; but these obligations have changed their character, and require to be defined anew. Till they are so defined and thoroughly realised by both, the intercourse between the classes can never resume a perfectly simple and satisfactory footing. At present, circumstances and recollections combine to make it impossible to mix either on the old footing of feudalism, or on the new footing of equality. The great repudiate the one ; the lower orders repudiate the other. There are three relations in which capital and labour, the rich and the poor, the noble and the peasant, may stand to each other. There is the relation of slavery, the relation of vassalage, the relation of simple contract. In the first there is absolute dependence and absolute control ; in the second there is a modified submission and partial protection and command ; in the third there is theoretic equality, and simple service is balanced against simple payment. In Egypt and in Carolina, the first of these relations subsists ; in Russia and Hungary the second ; in France and Pennsylvania the third ;—and in none of these countries is there any misunderstanding or confusion on the subject. In England, on the contrary, we are stepping from the second to the third of these relations, but have not yet quite realised or got accustomed to the change. Neither the higher nor the lower classes see clearly, or feel invariably, in which of the two relative positions they stand, or wish to stand. Each party borrows some of the *claims* of the former relation, but forgets the correlative *obligations*. The peasant and the artisan conceive that they are entitled to claim from

their master the forbearance, the kindness, the protection in danger, the assistance in difficulty, the maintenance in distress and destitution, which belong to the feudal relation; but they forget to pay the corresponding duties of consideration, confidence, and respect. On the other hand, the master is too apt to forget that his servants, and the nobleman that his tenants, are now, in the eye not only of the law but of society, his equal fellow-citizens; and he is still sometimes seen exacting from them, not only the stipulated work and rent, but that deference, devotion, and implicit obedience to which only virtue, justice, and beneficence on his part at present can entitle him.

Now we are not disposed to regret that the relative position of the classes has been thus changed: the matter for regret is that the change is not fully felt or comprehended, and that it has come upon us before both parties were perfectly prepared to meet it. In the new relation properly regarded and conscientiously adopted with all its corollaries, there may be, if less that is picturesque and poetical, more that is elevating, than in the old. We confess that, in spite of the seductions of fancy, we have no hankering after the past paradise of serfdom. We believe that the reciprocal dependence and fostering of feudalism have been replaced by something better, worthier, and more hopeful. There is no longer the same frequent and devoted attachment on the part of individuals among the rich to individuals among the poor (and *vice versâ*). But there is, what was unknown in feudal times, regard, care, and compassion for the poor as a class: sympathy for them and a sense of duty to them, as being an integral, acknowledged, vital portion of the community. In the regretted days of aristocracy and vassalage, the servant revered and loved his lord, and the lord was kind to the dependants who belonged to him, and was in daily intercourse with them;

but justice to the labouring *masses*, compassion to the aggregate poor, a desire to elevate and improve the condition of the people as a whole, were sentiments as yet unborn. Now, it is true, we see but seldom those attachments of superior and serf, — lasting, not only through a long lifetime, but through many generations — which so beautified and hallowed the social life of mediæval times. We do not so often witness the sports and feasts of peasants in the parks of our nobility, encouraged and presided over by the benevolent and condescending great. Instead, however, of all this we have signs of interest and regard more substantial, if less attractive; we have sanatory commissioners; we have factory and mine inspectors; we have organised education; we have official investigations into every reported abuse; and charitable associations for relieving or precluding every possible variety of wretchedness.

But feudalism has found a still more valuable substitute and successor. Self-reliance has replaced, or is fast replacing, among our working classes, the enthralling, enfeebling habits of dependence on the protection and guidance of another, which was distinctive of past times. Among the agricultural peasantry the old feelings and the old habits may linger still; but among artisans and handicraftsmen of every denomination, — among the dwellers in the great hives of our industry which are replenished from the rural districts, and who must in time communicate their own spirit to the homes from which they spring, — a proud sense of self-dependence, a resolution to owe their well-being and advancement to themselves alone, a surly and contemptuous thrusting back of charitable aid or guidance from above, are rapidly spreading, and manifesting themselves sometimes in forms which we might resent and deplore, were not the substance which gives rise to them so beyond all price.

The duties which the higher ranks of society owe

to those below them in the social hierarchy, are not obliterated or discharged by this change in their relative positions, which modern times and political reforms have brought about : but the nature of these duties is materially altered. To distressed individuals of every description and of all ranks we all owe tender compassion and charitable aid : while to the lower orders, as such, we owe not charity but justice,—not so much the open purse, as the equal measure. Advice, as far as they will receive it ; guidance, as far as they will submit to it ; control at times, as far as the unbounded freedom of the English constitution will enable us to exercise it ; education of the best quality and to the utmost extent that our unhappy sectarian jealousies will permit us to bestow it. We owe them fair play in everything ; justice of the most even-handed sort, full, unquestionable, and overflowing ; the removal of every external impediment which prevents them from doing and being whatever other classes can do and be. We owe it to them to employ our superior capacities, our richer opportunities, our maturer wisdom, in cheering their toil, smoothing their difficulties, directing their often misguided and suicidal energies. We owe to them every facility with which we can surround their conflict with the obstacles of life,—facility to obtain land, to obtain employment, or obtain colonisation ; facility to acquire temperate habits, to accumulate savings, to employ them wisely, to invest them well : facility, above all, to acquire that which is at once the key and crown of all,—solid and comprehensive instruction in all the things which belong both to their earthly welfare and their future peace. Our duty to them *as a class*, may be comprised in a single sentence ; we should enable them to *get* everything, but should *give* them nothing,—except education ; and if we give this to one generation, the next may safely be trusted to get it for themselves. Compassion to the afflicted, encouragement

to the struggling, aid to the feeble, succour to the destitute,—these man owes to man, independent of rank or station, creed or colour, according to the measure of need on the one side and capacity on the other.

The chapter which is devoted to Sir Robert Peel is one of the most interesting in the book. Mr. Johnston regards that eminent and lamented statesman from an opponent's point of view, but in no hostile spirit. He considers that to speak of him as "the embodiment and type of the age in which he lived, implies no compliment, if the age be (as he evidently conceives it) essentially unheroic—an age of compromise and artifice—an age more prolific of prudence than of elevated feeling—an age in which generous enthusiasm is dead." Again, he is inclined to account for the high and sincere encomiums passed upon Sir Robert Peel by leading men of all parties, "by a vitiated state of the general mind, so far as regards public affairs; by the want of heroic attachment to high principle, by the fact that we have at present upper classes at once disdainful and mean, and middle classes worshipping what is safest, or what seems so."

Now though we do not think that Mr. Johnston is altogether just to the character of Sir Robert Peel, still it is not our province to undertake his defence at present, except in as far as the grounds on which he is condemned would ensure the condemnation of nearly all the statesmen of the age; and besides, would indicate a want of appreciation of their peculiar difficulties, and a misconception of the qualities of character and the course of conduct exacted from them by the nature of representative governments and the circumstances of modern times.

It is a common complaint among the *laudatores temporis acti*,—and our author echoes it in more than

one passage—that the race of great statesmen has died out,—that their modern representatives are dwarfed and dwindled, and that statesmanship itself has become low, time-serving, and mediocre. The sentiment is no new one: as the men of our days look upon Pitt, and Fox, and Burke, the men of their times looked back on Bolingbroke and Chatham; these in their turn on Halifax and Clarendon; and these again on Walsingham and Burleigh. But the truth is that the statesmen of one age or country are unsuited to the requirements of another; and it is from failing to bear this in mind that we are so generally unjust to the men of our own day, so needlessly desponding about our future, and so apt unduly to extol the great leaders of the past. Our age demands very different qualifications in its public men from those which made men eminent and serviceable in the times of our forefathers. The statesmen of an autocratic government, like Austria or Russia, would scarcely be more out of place in a constitutional government like ours, than the statesmen of Elizabeth, or Charles, or Anne would find themselves in the reign of Victoria. The magnificent powers of Sully and Richelieu, even of Stein and Hardenberg, would be misplaced in the latitude of London. Marlborough and Godolphin would be impeached for corruption; the domineering genius of Lord Chatham would cause him to be shelved as an “impracticable” man, with whom it was impossible to act; the imperious temper of Hyde and Strafford would be much more promptly fatal to them in our days than they at last became even in their own; and even a Cecil or a Bacon could scarcely manage to govern with a reformed parliament as “viceroy over them.” The very qualities which made men great in public life formerly, would bar them out from public life now. A vast change has taken place in the nature of the statesmanship required; and it is still in pro-

gress. The statesmanship required now is far less initiative and more administrative than formerly. A public man in the present day cannot decide upon his principles and purposes, and carry them out by the mere force of the high position to which his sovereign may have raised him. He is debarred from the glorious power which belongs to the rulers of autocratic states, of deciding in his own mind on the measures suited to ensure his country's grandeur or well-being, and enacting and enforcing them, regardless of the opposition of parties less far-seeing, less profound, less patriotic than himself. He cannot place before him a great object, and say, "This my position as prime minister enables me to attain, and I will disregard present hostility and blame, and trust to future results to justify and vindicate my wisdom." He is denied that noblest privilege of the wise and mighty—that which gives to statesmanship its resistless fascination for the ripened mind—the right to elaborate, "in the quietness of thought," a system of policy, solid in its foundations, impartial in its justice, far-reaching, fertilising, beneficent in its operation,—and to pursue it with unswerving and imperturbable resolve. He cannot, like Peter, systematise the civilisation of a barbarous empire; he cannot, like Richelieu, by the union of high office and indomitable will, subdue and paralyse a haughty and ancient aristocracy; he cannot, like Colbert, reconstruct the finances and commerce of a great kingdom; he cannot, like Stein, by an overpowering fiat, raise a whole nation of *prolétaires* out of serfdom into civil possessions and civil rights. He is powerless except in as far as he can induce others to agree with him. He has not only to conceive and mature wise schemes, he has to undergo the far more painful and vexatious labour of persuading others of their excellence, of instructing the ignorance of some, of convincing the understandings of others, of com-

bating the honest prejudices of one party, of neutralising the interested opposition of another; he has to clip, to modify, to emasculate his measures, to enfeeble them by some vital omission in order to conciliate this antagonist, to clog them with some perilous burden in order to satisfy that rival, till he is fain to doubt whether compromise has not robbed victory of its profit as well as of its charms.

These are some of the difficulties which statesmen have to overcome in a country where parliament is omnipotent, and where every citizen is a dogmatic and self-complacent politician. Though modern statesmanship may call for other qualities than those needed in former days, the qualities are assuredly neither fewer, less lofty, nor less rare. A thorough mastery of facts, a clear purpose, a patient temper, a persevering will; a profound knowledge of men, of the motives which actuate them, of the influences by which they are to be swayed; skill to purchase the maximum of support by the minimum of concession; tact to discern the present temper and the probable direction of the popular feeling; sagacity to distinguish between the intelligent and the unintelligent public opinion, between the noisy clamour of the unimportant few, and the silent convictions of the influential many, between the outcry which may be safely and justly disregarded, and the expression of the mind of the country which it would be wrong and dangerous to withstand;—these are surely qualifications which demand no ordinary combination of moral and intellectual endowments. The statesman of to-day requires as comprehensive a vision and as profound a wisdom as in former times, with intenser labour, and a far wider range of knowledge; but he requires other gifts which formerly were scarcely needed. For, he now has not only to decide what ought to be done, and what is the wisest way of doing it, but he has to do it, or as

much of it as he can, in the face of obstacles of which Machiavelli had no conception, which would have baffled Mazarin, and at which even Chatham or Walpole might have stood aghast. To quarrel with a statesman because he is what his age compels him to be, because he meets the requirements of his day and generation, because he does not import into a democratic age, and into a country in which the popular element is unprecedentedly active and powerful, the habits and qualities of mind which could only find their fitting field and natural development in aristocratic or despotic eras, is simply to join issue with the political necessities of the times. In England, in the middle of the nineteenth century, with a reformed parliament, with a free and powerful press, with a population habituated throughout all its ranks to the discussion of political affairs, a minister, whatever be his genius, can no longer *impose his will* upon the nation; to be useful and great he must carry the nation along with him, he must be the representative and embodiment of its soberest and maturest wisdom,—not the depository or exponent, still less the imperious enforcer, of views beyond their sympathy, and above their comprehension. The nature of our government prescribes the qualifications of our statesmen; to hanker after a different order of men is to pine for a different order of things.

With these remarks we close our notice of Mr. Johnston's work. It is a readable and well-written book, abounding with information of many kinds. Its faults are, a want of purpose, too manifest a disposition to decry the present and exalt the past, and too blinding a habit of looking at most questions,—whether they concern things or persons,—from a party point of view.

To this last objection we may be peculiarly alive, the party views not being our own.

MARY BARTON.*

"MARY BARTON" is a work of higher pretensions than an ordinary novel. It aims not only at the delineation of the joys and sorrows, the loves and hatreds of our common humanity, but it professes also to give a picture of the feelings, habits, opinions, character and social condition of a particular class of the people, — a class, too, which has of late years attracted a great share of public attention, and has probably been the subject of more misconception and misrepresentation than has fallen to the lot of any other.

The scene of the story is laid in Manchester ; the time selected is the period of severe manufacturing distress which occurred about the year 1842 ; and the *dramatis personæ* belong almost exclusively to the factory population. The outline is briefly as follows :—John Barton, — a factory operative of considerable, but no way remarkable intelligence, of a sensitive and affectionate, but moody and unchastened temper, a zealous member of Trades' Unions, and a diligent reader of the "Northern Star," — having lost two children during a previous period of distress, and being now deprived of his wife, who died in child-birth, becomes at length quite soured by calamity. By constantly dwelling on his own sorrows and on the privations and sufferings around him, he grows morose, passionate, and vindictive ; and ends by the deliberate assassination, during a strike for wages, of one of the master manufacturers, — a young man of

* From the "Edinburgh Review."

Mary Barton ; a Tale of Manchester Life. London : 1848.

kind heart, but of somewhat supercilious manners; of whose only real offence against him — an attempt to seduce his daughter — John Barton is, and remains, wholly ignorant. This is the main plot: the interest of the tale is varied, and very efficiently, in the person of James Wilson, a young mechanic of the better order, and devoted lover of the heroine, Mary Barton. Suspicious circumstances having led to his trial for the murder which her father had committed, he is acquitted at the last moment, mainly through her exertions. Several other characters are introduced of singular beauty and reality; Alice, an excellent and simple-hearted old woman who goes about doing good, — old Job Legh, a poor and self-taught naturalist, and his daughter Margaret, whose loss of her sight is compensated by the seasonable discovery of her talent as a singer, — and the uneducated and querulous, but affectionate Mrs. Wilson, — every one of them belonging to the same rank in life. Indeed all the personages of the story, with the exception of Mr. Carson, the mill-owner, and his unfortunate son, are taken from the strictly artisan class.

This meagre sketch will perhaps enable those few of our readers who have not also been readers of the book itself, to form some conception of the construction of the story, and to understand our extracts. The literary merit of the work is in some respects of a very high order. Its interest is intense; often painfully so: indeed it is here, we think, that the charm of the book and the triumph of the author will chiefly be found. Its pictures and reflections are, however, also full of those touches of nature which “make the whole world kin;” and its dialogues are managed with a degree of ease and naturalness rarely attained even by the most experienced writers of fiction. We believe that they approach very nearly, both in tone and style, to the conversations actually carried on in the dingy cottages

of Lancashire. The authoress—for “Mary Barton” is understood to be, and indeed very palpably is, the production of a lady—must not be confounded with those writers who engage with a particular subject, because it presents a vein which they imagine may be successfully worked—get up the needful information, and then prepare a story as a solicitor might prepare a case. She has evidently lived much among the people she describes, made herself intimate at their firesides, and feels a sincere, though sometimes too exclusive and indiscriminating, sympathy with them. In short, her work has been clearly a “labour of love,” and has been written with a most earnest and benevolent purpose. We can conscientiously pronounce it to be a production of great excellence, and of still greater promise.

But it must also be regarded in a more serious point of view. It comes before us professing to be a faithful picture of a little known, though most energetic and important, class of the community; and it has the noble ambition of doing real good by creating sympathy, by diffusing information, and removing prejudices. To its pretensions in these respects, we regret that we cannot extend an unqualified approbation. With all the truthfulness displayed in the delineation of individual scenes, the general impression left by the book, on those who read it as mere passive recipients, will be imperfect, partial, and erroneous. Notwithstanding the good sense and good feeling with which it abounds, it is calculated, we fear, in many places, to mislead the minds and confirm and exasperate the prejudices, of the general public on the one hand, and of the factory operatives on the other. Were “Mary Barton” to be only read by Manchester men and master manufacturers, it could scarcely fail to be serviceable; because they might profit by its suggestions, and would at once detect its mistakes. But considering the ex-

traordinary delusions of many throughout the south of England respecting the great employers of labour in the north and west; as well as the ignorance and misconception of their true interests and position, which are still too common among the artisans of many of our large towns,—the effect of the work, if taken without some corrective, might, in these quarters, be mischievous in the extreme. And this must be our apology for pointing out, in some detail, both the false philosophy and the inaccurate descriptions which detract so seriously from the value of these most interesting volumes.

But first we must indulge ourselves in the more pleasing task of noticing the beauty and fidelity with which the authoress seizes on and depicts those bright redeeming features which still characterise our operative population; and in which we recognise with pride, not only some of the highest and most difficult attainments of virtue, but “germs of almost impossible good,”—signs and elements of progress towards a social and moral eminence, distant yet, and very lofty, but nevertheless within their reach. First among these must be reckoned what Monckton Milnes so justly calls “the sacred Patience of the poor.” The extent to which this virtue prevails can be only appreciated by those who have mixed intimately with the working classes. It is a spectacle fitted to amaze and shame the more favoured children of fortune. Distress they submit to without surprise, and generally without murmur, as one of the appointed incidents to their lot. They are often very deficient, it is true, in the foresight and self-denial which might provide against the recurrence of privation; but, when it comes, they meet it with a cheerful, manly, simple resignation, accepting

“Each ill

As a plain fact whose right or wrong

They question not, confiding still
That it shall last not overlong ;
Willing, from first to last, to take
The mysteries of our life as given,
Leaving the time-worn soul to slake
Its thirst in an undoubted Heaven."

Feelings of envy, against individuals or classes enjoying an apparent exemption from the privations with which they are overwhelmed, or of indignation at any supposed want of compassion on the part of those blessed with a happier lot—natural and probable as such would seem to be—we believe in fact to be rare, partial, and transient among the labouring people. Men there are, and will be in every class, of unhappy, selfish tempers, prone to dwell on painful comparisons, and to embitter their own condition by every contrast they can gather round it. But these are so far from being types of the poor in general, that they are found more sparingly among the poor than in any other rank of life. We have watched the operatives of our populous towns during several periods of severe suffering; and (except from a few such ill-conditioned characters as we have just referred to) we scarcely remember to have heard an expression of angry envy or malignity. There has been many a lament, scarcely ever a curse; many a countenance clouded by care, rarely a face of petulant impatience; the predominant characteristic has always been a submissive hopefulness, often an almost stoical endurance, and as soon as times mended, there has been generally even too speedy a forgetfulness of past troubles.

This admirable feature in the artisan character, the authoress of "Mary Barton" has discovered and delineated in the cases of George Wilson and Old Alice; though, from the circumstance of the discontented man, John Barton, being the more prominent person, the

erroneous impression would be conveyed to the reader, that patience is the exception, and ill-humour and vindictiveness the rule, — especially among the stronger and more thoughtful natures. The following is a conversation between the two friends, Wilson and Barton, by the bedside of one of their destitute and dying comrades:—

“ ‘ Han you known this chap long?’ asked Barton.

“ ‘ Better nor three year. He’s worked with Carsons that long, and were always a steady, civil spoken fellow, though, as I said afore, somewhat of a Methodee. I wish I’d gotten a letter he sent his missis a week or two ago, when he were on tramp for work. It did my heart good to read it; for you see, I were a bit grumbling mysel; it seemed hard to be spunging on Jem (his son), and taking a’ his flesh-meat money to buy bread for me and them as I ought to be keeping. But you know, though I can earn nought, I mun eat summut. Well, as I telled ye, I were grumbling, when she (indicating the sleeping woman by a nod) brought me Ben’s letter, for she could na read hersel. It were as good as Bible words; ne’er a word o’ repining; a’ about God being our father, and that we mun bear patiently whate’er he sends.’

“ ‘ Don ye think he’s the master’s father too? I’d be loath to have them for brothers.’

“ ‘ Eh, John; donna talk so; sure there’s many and many a master as good or better nor us.’

“ ‘ If you think so, tell me this. How comes it they’re rich, and we’re poor? I’d like to know that. Han they done as they’d be done by for us?’

“ ‘ But Wilson was no arguer. No speechifier as he would have called it. So Barton, seeing he was likely to have it his own way, went on.’

Wilson then goes away to obtain a recommendation to the infirmary for his sick friend; when he returns he finds him sensible, but rapidly sinking:—

“ ‘ His strength was ebbing fast. They stood round him still and silent; even the wife checked her sobs, though her heart was like to break. She held her child to her breast, to try and

keep it quiet. Their eyes were all fixed on the yet living one, whose moments of life were passing so rapidly away. At length he brought, with jerking, convulsive effort, his two hands into the attitude of prayer. They saw his lips move, and bent to catch the words, which came in gasps, and not in tones.

“ ‘ Oh, Lord God! I thank thee that the hard struggle of living is over.’ ”

“ ‘ Oh, Ben! Ben!’ wailed forth his wife; ‘ have you no thought for me? Oh, Ben! Ben! do say one word to help me through life.’ ”

“ He could not speak again. The trump of the archangel would set his tongue free; but not a word more would it utter till then. Yet he heard, he understood, and though sight failed, he moved his hand gropingly under the covering. They knew what he meant, and guided it to her head, bowed and hidden in her hands, when she had sunk in her woe. It rested there with a feeble pressure of endearment. The face grew beautiful, as the soul neared God. A peace beyond understanding came over it. The hand became a stiff, heavy weight on the wife’s head. No more grief or sorrow for him. They reverently laid out the corpse— Wilson fetching his only spare shirt to array it in.”

There are many other descriptions of exquisite pathos scattered up and down the narrative, some of which we would fain have extracted. But we must pass on.

Another feature in the character of the operative poor, perhaps even lovelier and brighter than their wonderful patience under suffering, is their mutual helpfulness and unbounded kindness towards each other. To this virtue our authoress has done full justice, and her pictures of it are so vivid, that we must present one of them at least, however long the passage, to our readers:—

“ There were homes over which Carson’s fire (his mill has been burnt down) threw a deep terrible gloom; the homes of those who would fain work, and no man gave unto them;—the homes of those to whom leisure was a curse. There the family music was hungry wails, when week after week passed by, and

there was no work to be had, and consequently no wages to pay for the bread the children cried aloud for in the young impatience of suffering. Many a penny that would have gone little way enough in oatmeal or potatoes, bought opium to still the hungry little ones, and make them forget their uneasiness in heavy troubled sleep. The evil and the good of our nature came out strongly then. There were desperate fathers; there were bitter-tongued mothers (O God! what wonder!); there were reckless children; the very closest bonds of nature were snapped in that time of trial and distress. There was faith such as the rich can never imagine upon earth; there was 'love strong as death,' and self-denial among rude coarse men, akin to that of Sir Philip Sidney's most glorious deed. The vices of the poor sometimes astound us *here*; but when the secrets of all hearts shall be made known, their virtues will astound us in far greater degree. Of this I am certain.

"As the cold bleak spring came on (spring in name alone), and consequently as trade continued dead, other mills shortened hours, turned off hands, and finally stopped work altogether. Barton worked short hours; Wilson, of course, being a hand in Carson's factory, had no work at all. . . . One evening, when the clear light at six o'clock contrasted strangely with the Christmas cold, and when the bitter wind piped down every entry, and through every cranny, Barton sat brooding over his stunted fire, and listening for Mary's step, in unacknowledged trust that her presence would cheer him. The door was opened, and Wilson came breathless in.

" 'You've not got a bit of money by you, Barton?' asked he.

" 'Not I; who has now, I'd like to know. Whattur do you want it for?'

" 'I donnot want it for mysel, though we've none to spare. But don ye know Ben Davenport, as worked at Carson's? He's down wi' the fever, and ne'er a stick of fire, nor a cowl potato in the house.'

" 'I han got no money, I tell ye,' said Barton. Wilson looked disappointed. Barton tried not to be interested, but he could not help it, in spite of his gruffness. He rose, and went to the cupboard (his wife's pride long ago). There lay the remains of his dinner, hastily put there ready for supper. Bread, and a slice of cold fat boiled bacon. He wrapped them in his

handkerchief, put them in the crown of his hat, and said, 'Come, let's be going.'

" 'Going—art going to work this time of day? '

" 'No, stupid, to be sure not. Going to see the fellow thou spoke on.' So they put on their hats and set out. On the way, Wilson said Davenport was a good fellow, though too much of the Methodee; that his children were too young to work, but not too young to be cold and hungry; that they had sunk lower and lower, and pawned thing after thing, and that now they lived in a cellar in Berry Street."

Here follows a sad description of the filthiness of the locality, — where

"the smell was so fœtid as almost to knock the two men down. Quickly recovering themselves, as those inured to such things do, they began to penetrate the thick darkness of the place, and to see three or four little children rolling on the damp, nay wet brick floor, through which the stagnant, filthy moisture of the street oozed up; — the fire-place was empty and black; the wife sat on her husband's chair, and cried in the dank loneliness.

" 'See, missis, I'm back again. Hold your noise, children, and don't mither your mammy for bread; here's a chap as has got some for you.'

"In that dim light, which was darkness to strangers, they clustered round John Barton, and tore from him the food he had brought with him. It was a large hunch of bread, but it had vanished in an instant.

" 'We mun do summut for 'em,' said he to Wilson. 'Yo stop here, and I'll be back in half an hour.'

"So he strode and ran, and hurried home. He emptied into the ever-useful pocket-handkerchief the little meal remaining in the mug. Mary would have her tea at Miss Simmonds'; her food for the day was safe. Then he went up stairs for his better coat, and his one, gay, red-and-yellow silk pocket-handkerchief — his jewels, his plate, his valuables, these were. He went to the pawn-shop; he pawned them for five shillings; he stopped not, nor stayed, till he was once more in London Road, within five minutes' walk of Berry Street — then he loitered in his gait, in order to discover the shops he wanted. He bought

meat, and a loaf of bread, candles, chips; and from a little retail yard he purchased a couple of hundred weight of coals. Some money yet remained — all destined for them, but he did not yet know how best to spend it. Food, light, and warmth, he had seen instantly were necessary; for luxuries he would wait. Wilson's eyes filled with tears as he saw Barton enter with his purchases. He understood it all; and longed to be once more in work, that he might help in some of these material ways, without feeling that he was using his son's money. But though 'silver and gold had he none,' he gave heart-service, and love-works of far more value. Nor was John Barton behind in these. . . .

"The two men, rough, tender nurses as they were, lighted the fire, which smoked and puffed into the room, as if it did not know its way up the chimney. The children clamoured again for bread; but this time Barton took a piece first to the poor, helpless, hopeless woman, who still sat by the side of her husband, listening to his anxious miserable mutterings. She took the bread, when it was put into her hands, and broke a bit, but could not eat. She was past hunger. She fell down on the floor, with a heavy unresisting bang. The men looked puzzled. . . .

" 'I'll tell you what I'll do,' said Wilson. 'I'll take these two big lads, as does nought but fight, home to my missis's for to-night, and I will get a jug of tea. Them women always does best with tea and such like slops.'

"So Barton was now left alone with a little child, crying (when it had done eating) for mammy; with a fainting dead-like woman; and with the sick man; whose mutterings were rising up to screams and shrieks of agonised anxiety. He carried the woman to the fire, and chafed her hands. He looked around for something to raise her head. There was literally nothing but some loose bricks. However, those he got; and taking off his coat, he covered them as well as he could. He pulled her feet to the fire, which now began to emit some faint heat. He looked round for water, but water there was none. He snatched up the child, and ran up the area steps to the room above, and borrowed their only saucepan with some water in it. Then he began, with the useful skill of a working man, to make some gruel."

We are proud to be enabled to testify that the scene presented in this extract is not only true to individual life, but it is the expression of a general fact. There is scarcely any degree of trouble and self-denial which men in this class will not encounter to serve their fellow-sufferers; and no service is more cheerfully and punctually repaid when the position of the parties is reversed. To the poor man, poverty greater than his own never appeals in vain : —

“ To give the stranger’s children bread,
Of your precarious board the spoil —
To watch your helpless neighbour’s bed,
And, sleepless, meet the morrow’s toil ; ”

These are the daily offerings of mutual love which we witness among the lowest members of the struggling artisans. And perhaps they ought to surprise us less than they do: for in contrasting them with the comparative dulness and indifference of the wealthy to the sufferings of those below them, we are apt to lose sight of two very relevant considerations; one is, that sympathy — meaning by it fellow-feeling — *can* only exist in its fullest extent among persons of the same condition, surrounded by the same circumstances, inured to the same privations, — who know that the distress they are called upon to mitigate was their own yesterday, and may be their own again to-morrow. What is thus true sympathy between the poor, becomes, when transferred to the relation between rich and poor, what is commonly expressed by the word compassion — a sentiment far feebler and less complete. Moreover, the rich can never have the same knowledge of the troubles and difficulties of the poor, which the poor have of their own. Their paths lie apart. However much they may endeavour to visit among them, to become familiar with their circumstances, and acquainted with their griefs, — they *can* do



all this, from the very nature of the case, only very imperfectly. There is not only the natural difficulty arising from discrepancy of life, feelings, and position, to be overcome; but the very shrinking and reluctant pride of the independent poor opposes another barrier. Difference of position, therefore, lies at the root of the alleged want of sympathy: And, inadequate knowledge — under circumstances in which the inadequacy is inevitable — must bear at least half the blame of the apparent want of compassion with which the more prosperous are charged. If rich and poor could but change places for a while, they would understand each other better ever afterwards — and make more allowances for their respective failings.

Another consideration to which due weight is seldom allowed, is this: the cause which, of all others, most deadens and restrains the hand of charity, is the fear of bestowing it unworthily and mischievously. Immense difficulty is experienced by the rich, when they attempt to discriminate between cases of imposture, and cases of real destitution, — between cases which it would be a duty and a delight, and cases which it would often be a sin and a mischief to relieve. The poor experience no such difficulty. They have to guard against no imposition: for imposition with them would be easily and certainly detected. Their means and their feelings may be safely taken therefore as guides.

But we are putting off the unpleasant part of our duty. There are representations made — at least impressions left — by the book before us, which we have signalised as inaccurate and full of harm. Some of these we must proceed to notice: and first among them, the exaggeration of describing an animosity against masters and employers, as the common quality and characteristic of the operative population. The narrative imports that the angry and vindictive feelings by which

the soul of John Barton is absorbed, are constant and pervading.

“I saw (says the writer in the preface) that they were sore and irritable against the rich; the even tenor of whose seemingly happy lives appeared to increase the anguish caused by the lottery-like nature of their own. Whether the bitter complaints made by them of the neglect which they experienced from the prosperous—especially from the masters whose fortunes they had helped to build up—were well founded or no, it is not for me to judge. It is enough to say that this belief of the injustice and unkindness which they endure from their fellow-creatures, taints what might be resignation to God’s will, and turns it to revenge in too many of the poor uneducated factory-workers of Manchester. . . . At present they seem to me to be left in a state, wherein lamentations and tears are thrown aside as useless, but in which the lips are compressed for curses, and the hands clenched and ready to smite.”

Now we do not hesitate to say, that the impression conveyed by such statements as this, is, to say the least, a material overcolouring of the truth. It is presumptuous, perhaps, to pronounce decidedly upon a point on which opinions will vary;—the experience of every man of course depending on the local and personal circumstances in which he has been thrown. But both our own observation, and the confirming views of others whose acquaintance with artisan life has been even more extensive and intimate than our own, enable us to speak with some confidence. It is unquestionably and unfortunately true, that sentiments of animosity of this description do exist in a considerable degree, and in a degree which varies with the times. All that we contend for is, that they are exceptional, not general—local, limited, and transient,—and certainly not entertained by the working population at large. As a picture of an individual,—that is, of the feelings of this or that person,—John Barton is unhappily true to the life; as the type of a class, though a small one, he may

be allowed to pass muster: but to bring him forward as a fair representative of the artisans and factory operatives of Manchester, and similar towns generally, is a libel alike upon them and upon the objects of their alleged hatred. Much, no doubt, has been done, and is still being done, by those emissaries of ill-will who live upon the passions they excite, to create and foster bad feeling between classes so intimately bound together, as the manufacturing capitalist and the manufacturing labourer. Much has been done, too, both by senators and journalists, through slanders protected by privilege of parliament, and propagated by that mighty press, against whose injuries there is no defence, towards spreading among the more distant public the belief that this bad feeling does exist to a perilous extent. Notwithstanding which, however, we rejoice to know that the feeling is becoming every year rarer and less acrimonious; that it is more and more exclusively confined to the irregular, dissolute, and discontented *ex-workmen* who form the acting staff of trades' unions and delegations; and more and more exclusively directed against those employers—daily becoming fewer—who look upon the operatives they employ in the mingled light of coadjutors and antagonists—with whom their only concern is to drive as hard a bargain as they can; and that it is fast giving way before the increasing conviction of a common interest, and the humanising influence of faithful services rendered, on the one hand, and just treatment, willing aid, and benevolent kindness on the other.

There is, too, it seems to us, a double error, both an artistic error, and an error of fact, in representing a man of Barton's intelligence and habits of reflection and discussion, to be so ignorant of the first principles of commercial and economic science as he is here described.

Probably this arises from the writer's acknowledged unacquaintance with social and political economy herself, and from her ignorance how far the rudiments of these sciences have been mastered by the more thoughtful and the better educated artisans of our large towns. But indeed the lights and shades are thrown too strongly on everything relating to John Barton. The effect may have thus been made more startling: but, we think, at the expense of probability. It is not that he has, more or less, two natures. That is common to us all. Our objection is, that his conduct is radically inconsistent with his qualities and character. He is not only an intelligent man, but a steady and skilful workman; and so confident in his own capacity always procuring for him certain employment, that he never, when in receipt of the highest wages (vol. i. p. 33.), lays by a farthing for a time of sickness at home, or stagnation of trade. Meanwhile, whenever these periods come, he is found cursing his masters instead of his own improvidence; spending his time and money on trades' unions, when both his child and himself are unsupplied with the barest necessities of life; and wasting (as so many operatives do), in subscriptions for such objects, funds which, duly husbanded, would have saved his only son (whose loss, we are told, has warped his temper) from an early grave. Yet neither to the authoress, nor to the supposed subject of her delineation, is it at any time intimated as occurring that, if ever there was a clear case in which a man had to thank himself for most of his sorrows and misfortunes, John Barton's was that case. On the contrary, he is painted as utterly unconscious, even to the last, of his own improvidence, and of its sinister influence on his condition. Instead of drawing from his privations those lessons of warning and remorse which, to an intellect like his, must have been as patent as the day, they are merely made to heap up

fresh fuel for that funeral pile, to which his senseless and vindictive passion is at last to set fire.

There is evil enough in the world, God knows, and we all know, to try the temper, we will not say the faith, of both rich and poor ; and the evils of society press often with crushing severity on the poor :—

“ At all times it is a bewildering thing for the poor weaver to see his employer removing from house to house, each one grander than the last, till he ends in building one more magnificent than all, or withdraws his money from the concern, or sells his mill to buy an estate in the country, while all this time the weaver, who thinks that he and his fellows are the real makers of this wealth, is struggling on for bread for his children, through the vicissitudes of lowered wages, short hours, fewer hands employed, &c. And when he knows trade is bad, and could understand (at least partially) that there are not buyers enough in the market to purchase the goods already made, and consequently that there is no demand for more ; when he would bear much without complaining, could he also see that his employers were bearing their share ; he is, I say, bewildered, and (to use his own phrase) ‘aggravated’ to see that all goes on just as usual with the mill-owners. Large houses are still occupied, while spinners’ and weavers’ cottages stand empty, because the families that once occupied them are obliged to live in rooms or cellars. Carriages still roll along the streets, concerts are still crowded with subscribers, the shops for expensive luxuries still find daily customers, while the workman loiters away his unemployed time in watching these things, and thinking of the pale, uncomplaining wife at home, and the wailing children asking in vain for enough of food, of the sinking health, of the dying life of those near and dear to him. The contrast is too great.”

The following quotation is from the same conversation between Barton and his friend Wilson, of which we have already quoted a part. They are discussing the same subject—the difference between their masters’ lot and their own :—

“ Barton, seeing he was likely to have his own way, went on.

“ ‘ You’ll say (at least many a one does) they’n gotten capital, and we’n gotten none. I say, our labour’s our capital, and we ought to draw interest on that. They get interest on their capital, somehow all this time, while our’n is lying idle, else how could they all live as they do? Besides, there’s many of them had nought to begin with; there’s Carsons, and Duncombes, and Margies, and many another, as comed into Manchester with clothes to their back, and that were all, and now they’re worth their tens of thousands, a’ gotten out of our labour;—why, the very land as fetched but sixty pounds twenty year agone, is worth six hundred now, and that too, is owing to our labour;—but look at yo, and see me, and poor Davenport yonder; whatten better are we? They’n screwed us down to the lowest peg, in order to make their great big fortunes, and build their great big houses, and we—why we’re just clemming, many and many of us. Can you say there’s nought wrong in this?’ ”

“ ‘ Well, Barton, I’ll not gainsay ye. But Mr. Carson spoke to me after the fire, and, says he, “ I shall ha’ to retrench, and be very careful in my expenditure during these bad times, I assure ye; ”—so yo see th’ masters suffer too.’ ”

“ ‘ Han they ever seen a child o’ their’n die for want of food?’ asked Barton in a low deep voice.”

Now here was a most favourable occasion for pointing out the just reflections to be drawn from such a contrast; yet it is so entirely passed by, that we are constrained to conclude that they were unperceived by the writer herself. It is, we fear, too true that some envy, and much exasperation, do arise, at times, in the breasts of the more inconsiderate of the manufacturing poor, when they see those periods of commercial depression, which press so heavily upon themselves, borne so easily and with so little apparent privation by their masters. But there was only the more reason for seizing the opportunity to impress upon them both the real fact and the real philosophy of the case. It was only the more necessary to inform them (as numerous stoppages of wealthy firms might indeed readily bring home to

their conviction) that their masters *do* suffer, and suffer most painfully, from those reverses and stagnation of trade, which they imagine to fall solely on themselves; to picture, however cursorily, the position of those employers who, on such occasions, have seen the accumulations of years of patient and honest industry suddenly swept away, and who, at an advanced period of life, have had to set to work to reconstruct the shattered fabric of their fortunes—and of those who, compromised more deeply still, find the prospects of their children blighted, their objects defeated, and their occupation gone. It is not true that such periods as 1842, when the scene of the narrative is laid, pass lightly over any of the great employers of manufacturing labour. Their sufferings are not the less severe, because the worst part of them are of a kind into which their dependants cannot at once enter. And the simple reason—the explanation which lies upon the surface—why they do not suffer as severely and as *obviously* as the operatives is, that *they*, in the days of prosperity, had laid by a portion of their earnings, and that the operatives had not; and that, therefore, when profits ceased, and losses took their place—a change which long precedes the reduction of wages, or the cessation of employment—they could subsist out of their previous savings, while the improvident operatives had no savings to fall back upon. How came it never to occur to the authoress, or to her hero, that had Mr. Carson (who is represented as having raised himself from the operative class) thought as little of saving as John Barton, who so envied and so wronged him, their condition and their sufferings, when the period of distress arrived, would have been precisely equal? It was, in truth, because the one had been prudent and foreseeing, and the other confident and careless—because the one had busied himself about his work, while the other had busied him-

self about unions and politics, that their positions, when the evil day came, which came alike to both, were so strangely contrasted.*

The forgetfulness—or the delusion, whichever it be—which we have here noted, is unhappily so common, and it discloses so much of the secret both of the present and the future condition of the manufacturing population, that we must dwell upon it for a few moments longer. People at a distance are not aware, either to what an extent the actual wealth of the master manufacturers is the result of patient savings from very moderate *average* profits, nor (which is our immediate point) of the extent to which saving is within the power

* We admit readily, however, and should always bear in mind, that the sufferings of the operative, even when occasioned by what may be called the total ruin of the master, are, while they last, greatly more intense than the master's. There is no instance, we suppose, of a bankrupt master being reduced to the squalid cellar life of the Davenports, or even to breaking stones on the highways, or to the asylum of the workhouse. Unless he has been fraudulent as well as unfortunate or imprudent, his connections, or even his creditors, interpose to save him from these dreadful extremities; and it would be equally heartless and absurd to deny that *these* are beyond measure worse, and more trying both to our moral and our physical nature, than a mere descent from wealth to poverty, from the luxuries and vanities of life to its scantiest comforts, cares, and privations. There is this approach, however, to a compensation in the case of the operative, that his trials, though more bitter and overwhelming for the time, are generally shorter. The enterprising manufacturer, who loses in one desolating season the wealth accumulated by the patient and anxious labour of many preceding years, can seldom hope to regain either the fortune or the position he has lost; and he generally passes the remainder of his life a broken-spirited and unprosperous man—while as soon as employment returns, the operative is as well off, and too often as imprudent as ever; and though the thoughtful and sensitive among them may be occasionally depressed or irritated by anticipating the probable recurrence of such terrible visitations, it is certainly true that a far larger proportion of them soon recover their natural cheerfulness, than is the case with the unfortunate among their employers.

of the factory operatives. In the first place, it should be known that, in spite of all we hear of fluctuations and stagnation of trade, this class suffers less perhaps than any other from variations of employment. There are two reasons for this: one is, that their employers, being generally wealthy, are able to carry on their business through any *ordinary* periods of depression, without curtailing or suspending production; in other words, they can afford to hold stocks. The other reason is, that the fixed capital employed is generally so large, and the consequent loss when it stands idle so enormous, that mills are never allowed to stop if it is *possible* to keep them going. A large manufacturer, according to the evidence of the factory inspectors, cannot stop his factory without a dead loss of from 4000*l.* to 5000*l.* a year. Profits, therefore, cease long before either wages or employment are affected; and it is only after a long continuance of unprofitable trade, that either are reduced. Operatives generally are now, indeed, aware of this fact; and, therefore, when their employer closes his mill, they know what an amount of pecuniary pressure such a step indicates, and they feel that he must be truly a fellow-sufferer. In the winter of 1847-48, when, owing to the failure in the American cotton crop, a greater number of mills ceased working or reduced their hours of work, than had ever previously been the case, so well was this understood, that scarcely one angry murmur or reproach was heard, though the sufferings of the people were severe beyond all former example.

But not only is the employment of the factory population generally constant and regular, their wages also have long been, and doubtless will soon again be, comparatively very high. The wages of men in most such establishments vary from 10*s.* to 40*s.*, and those of girls and women from 7*s.* to 15*s.* a week. And, as

from the nature of the work, in which even children can be made serviceable, several individuals of the same family are generally employed, the earnings of a family will very frequently reach 100*l.* a year—and by no means unfrequently, when the father is an overlooker or a spinner, 150*l.* to 170*l.*—a sum on which families in a much higher rank contrive to live in decency and comfort. Saving then, out of such earnings, is obviously not only practicable but easy. Unhappily it is rare: for not only is much wasted at the ale-house (though less now than formerly); not only is much squandered in subscriptions to trades' unions and *strikes*; but among the more highly paid operatives, spinners especially, gambling both by betting and at cards is carried on to a deplorable extent.* Much also is lost by bad housewifery; and we do not scruple to affirm that, were it possible (and who shall say that it is not?) to transport among these people, those thrifty habits, that household management, that shrewd, sober, steady conduct, characteristic of the Scotch peasantry, and which are so well depicted in Somerville's "Autobiography of a Working Man;" not merely comfort, but wealth and independence, would speedily become the rule instead of the exception among our Manchester artisans. Even as it is, we are cognisant of many cases where hundreds—in some instances thousands—of pounds have been laid by, for future calls, by factory workmen. Indeed, whenever you find one of this class too sensible or too religious to frequent the ale-house, too shrewd or too peaceable to subscribe to clubs or turn-outs, and wise enough to spend his money efficiently, or to marry a wife

* We have now lying before us some particulars, showing the prevalence of this vice, in one single factory. One man had lost 7*l.*, another 3*l.*, another 2*l.* 10*s.* in a single night at cards. In the same mill the losses incurred on one occasion, in the betting on a foot-race, by the hands in one department only, exceeded 12*l.*

who can; you are almost sure to learn that he has some independent property—often deposited in his master's hands, oftener still laid out in the purchase of cottages or railway shares. Many of them become in time managers of mills, and, ultimately, proprietors and master manufacturers.

As a confirmation of this statement, and as a contrast to the unnatural blindness and self-delusion of John Barton, we will give a picture drawn from the life by one thoroughly acquainted with the operative classes in the northern end, at least, of the island. It is an account of the actual progress upwards of a young mechanic, given by Mr. Robert Chambers.

“Englishmen have much to be thankful for, inasmuch as there is probably no country on the face of the globe where sober, industrious young mechanics and labourers, can so soon raise themselves to ease, comparative independence, and comfort, as in England. Many instances in real life might be given in proof thereof. Yet our present purpose may be best answered by presenting the case of one who, having lost his father and mother in childhood, has been indebted to the kind-hearted for the school learning he has acquired. During his apprenticeship he gained little beyond habits of industry. In the seven years of his apprenticeship, his master fell from a respectable station to one of abject poverty; owing to his taking the one glass, then the two, three, four, and onwards, till, by steps almost imperceptible, his business and family were neglected, whilst he joined his associates at the ale-house. But let us not dwell on this sad picture. On completing his twenty-first year, our orphan boy engaged in a situation where he received 15*s.* per week wages; 8*s.* of which he appropriated to food and lodgings, and 2*s.* to clothing, and a few books, to rub up his school-day learning. Warned by the example of his late master, he shunned the ale-house, and his steady conduct soon gained him the confidence of his employer, who, at the end of his first year, raised his wages to 21*s.* per week. At the end of the second year he found himself possessed of 40*l.*; 5*s.* per week had been regularly deposited in the bank for savings

during the first year, which amounted to 13*l.*; and in the second year 11*s.* per week, which was 28*l.* 12*s.* more. We need not follow him step by step in his steady but onward course. He has now been nineteen years in his present situation; for the last ten he has been the foreman, with a salary of 30*s.* per week. Twelve years ago he married a virtuous young woman, and he has now six fine children. The house he lives in is his own: a good garden is attached to it, and a fruitful and lovely spot it is; it serves as an excellent training ground for his children, whose very amusements in it are turned to good account. The mother brought no fortune with her, except herself. She had, indeed, lived as servant some years in a respectable family, where she had high wages; but all she could spare was devoted to the support of an infirm mother, who, on her marriage, was received into her husband's house, where the evening of her life is rendered happy. How is it, you ask, that a man of forty years of age, who has had nothing to depend upon but his own labour—who has a wife and six children, and an infirm mother-in-law to support—can have bought a piece of ground, built a house upon it, and can have it well furnished, and, after all, has upwards of 200*l.* out on interest? for he has been a servant all along, and is a servant still. Well, let us see if we can find out how it is. In the first place, and which, after all, is the main point, he spends nothing at the ale-house. The money which too many worse than waste there, he saves. At the age of twenty-three we find he had in the bank of savings 40*l.*

At the age of 24 he has	-	-	-	£70
„ 25 „	-	-	-	102
„ 26 „	-	-	-	135
„ 27 „	-	-	-	170
„ 28 „	-	-	-	206

He now marries, and expends on furniture 40*l.*, reducing the amount at interest to 166*l.*, but his wages are now advanced to 25*s.* per week; his saving of 5*s.* per week and interest in one year amount to 21*l.*, added to 166*l.*, makes 187*l.*, when twenty-nine years of age.

“At thirty years of age he has 210*l.*; wages now 30*s.* per week; saves 10*s.* and interest; he has 237*l.* at thirty-one years of age; at thirty-two he has 286*l.*; buys a plot of ground for

100*l.*, expends 150*l.* in building his dwelling-house, so that he reduces his money at interest to 36*l.*, saves his 10*s.* per week and interest on 36*l.*—27*l.* 16*s.*, makes 63*l.* 16*s.*, at the age of thirty-three.

At 34 he has -	-	-	-	-	£93
„ 35 „ -	-	-	-	-	125
„ 36 „ -	-	-	-	-	155
„ 37 „ -	-	-	-	-	181
„ 38 „ -	-	-	-	-	207

He now expends the interest, and saves only 10*s.* per week.

At 39 he has -	-	-	-	-	£233
„ 40 „ -	-	-	-	-	250

in addition to his house and garden.”

It is with many such facts as these fresh in our recollection, and with the knowledge that such facts might easily become characteristic of a whole class,—instead of remaining that of isolated individuals,—that we feel most vividly the injurious tendency of a tale like “Mary Barton,” where these facts are wholly ignored, and the salutary conclusions to be drawn from them neglected or suppressed. The whole book, too, is pervaded by one fatally false idea, which seems to have taken possession of the writer’s mind, and can scarcely fail to be impressed with equal vividness on the merely passive reader, viz. that the poor are to look to the rich, and not to themselves, for relief and rescue from their degraded condition and their social miseries. An impression more utterly erroneous, or more lamentably mischievous, it is difficult to conceive. It strikes at the root of all social improvement. It is a thoughtless echo of the virulent declamations daily sounded in the ears of the artisans by the worst of their intestine enemies. For who are the men who thus habitually labour to persuade the operatives to lay the burden of their own sins and follies at the door of their employers? Never the really distressed—never those

who have struggled manfully against destitution, and have struggled in vain; but very generally those who have thrown up lucrative employment, because they preferred travelling and haranguing to steady and honest toil;—or those whose dissolute and turbulent conduct has occasioned their dismissal, and rendered them marked and dishonoured men throughout the trade; or those who (like some we have already mentioned) will spend in card-playing or betting, in a single night, the income of many weeks.

The plain truth cannot be too boldly spoken, or too frequently repeated: the working classes, and they only, can raise their own condition; to themselves alone must they look for their elevation in the social scale; their own intellect and their own virtues must work out their salvation; their fate and their future are in their own hands,—and in theirs alone. Of the power of the agricultural population to do all this, we should speak more doubtingly, if we spoke at all; but in reference to the manufacturing and mechanical operatives, we speak with the conviction of positive knowledge (and the facts we have just mentioned cannot fail, we think, to obtain some credit for us, with most of our readers,) when we pronounce, that for them to be as well off in *their* station as their employers are in theirs—as well provided against the evil day of depression and reverse—as comfortable, according to their standard of comfort, in their daily life—as respectable in their domestic circumstances,—little more is necessary than that they should emulate their employers instead of envying them; that they should imitate their prudence and worldly wisdom, their unrelaxing diligence, their unflagging energy, their resolute and steady economy. It is not higher wages, nor more unvarying employment, that our artisans need. As it is, they are more highly paid than many clerks,

many schoolmasters, many curates. But, with their present habits, twice their present earnings would not mend their position. The want is moral, not material ; —a better education, to give purer tastes and higher aims,—strength and sense to withstand present temptation,—the courage to differ from their associates, and to pursue unflinchingly their chosen course.

With these qualities, they would have no need to call on the rich or on the legislature to assist them. They could attain the desired position without asking aid from their employers. In the absence of these qualities, no aid from any quarter can avail them one iota. The efforts of all the philanthropists that ever *ran a-muck* at evil could not render them any permanent service. Endow the wealthy employers of labour with all power and all knowledge, imbue their hearts with the kindest affections, let them call in legislative aid without measure and without stint ; and all combined would still remain as incompetent as at present, to bestow one real blessing, to render one abiding service to men who will lend no helping hand to their own emancipation, who persist in standing aloof from the cure of their own malady, and expect to achieve comfort and independence, while refusing to pay down the appointed purchase-money of frugality and foresight. The desperate delusion that the evils of society are to be remedied from *without*, not from *within*, that the people are to be passive parties,—and not the principal, almost the sole, agents,—in their own rehabilitation, has met with far too general countenance in quarters where sounder wisdom might have been looked for. The language held on this subject in parliament, by the periodical press, and in such works as this before us, has gone far to confirm their notions of their own helplessness, and thus perpetuate their supineness ; and, by so doing, has inflicted a degree of mischief on the labouring class, which, if it be per-

severed in, all the benevolent exertions made to relieve them must prove utterly powerless to countervail. The sounder, sterner, healthier doctrine, which we have ventured to enunciate,—hard as it may seem to preach it in a period of distress,—is the only one which can prevent this distress from perpetual and aggravated recurrence. The language which every true friend to the working man will hold to him, is this: “Trust to no external source for your prosperity in life; work out your own welfare; work it out with the tools you have. The charter may be a desirable object, the franchise may be worth obtaining; but your happiness, your position in life, will depend neither on the franchise nor the charter, neither on what parliament does, nor on what your employer neglects to do; but simply and solely upon the use you make of the fifteen or thirty shillings which you earn each week, and upon the circumstance whether you marry at twenty or at twenty-eight, and whether you marry a sluggard and a slattern or a prudent and industrious woman.” We are as certain as we can be of anything, that, if the factory operatives and mechanics were possessed of the education, the frugality, the prudence, and the practical sense which generally distinguish their employers, no change whatever, either in the regularity or the remuneration of their work, would be needed, to place them, as a body, in a state of independence, dignity, and comfort.

The peculiar feature in the character of the manufacturing operatives, which, next to their careless and spendthrift habits, has wrought them most suffering, and which, when we regard their immediate future, has saddened us at times almost to despondency, is their want of moral courage, of resolute individual will. No one, who has not been a close observer of them, can have a conception of the ease with which they are led to act, not only against their own interests, but against

their own wishes, by any person of their own class who chooses to assume the right of giving orders. Instances are of yearly, sometimes almost of daily occurrence, where numbers in receipt of comfortable wages, in regular work, under an employer whom they respect and like, enjoying, in fact, a position in every way satisfactory, and without any alleged or even imagined ground of complaint, have suddenly left their work, and thrown up all these advantages, on receiving a command to do so—without even waiting to ascertain whether the command emanated from a competent authority, sometimes even without waiting to inquire by whom the command was given. Instances have come to our knowledge where a whole class of factory operatives have struck work in a body, simply because one or two discontented individuals of their own number told them to do so,—although the vast majority obeyed with the greatest unwillingness, and though the certain consequences were severe suffering. In the year 1842, cases occurred of hundreds of quarry-men and masons throwing down their tools and retiring to their homes,—thus depriving themselves and their families of food,—for no other reason than because a man had run into the place where they were working, and had told them that they were not to strike another stroke! The idea of resistance to an order emanating from one of themselves, or from a union committee, formed (though they know not and inquire not how) out of their own body, seems never to occur to them. They have no power of *will*. The minority—often a very small, unknown, and invisible minority—commands the whole. Most *strikes*, in fact, are the act of the few against the wishes of the many. This non-resistance arises in part from the want of individual character among the operatives,—“they don’t like (they say) not to do as the others do;”

—and partly from the considerations thus expressed by a shrewd old workman in the book before us:—

“ ‘ You’re one of the Union, Job ? ’ asked Mary.

“ ‘ Aye,—I’m one, sure enough ; but I’m but a sleeping partner in the concern. I were obliged to become a member for peace, else I don’t go along with ’em. You see my folly is this, Mary. I would take what I could get ; I think half a loaf is better than no bread. I would work for low wages rather than sit idle and starve. But then comes the Trades’ Union, and says, “ Well, if you take the half loaf, we’ll worry you out of your life. Will you be clemmed, or will you be worried ? ” Now clemming is a quiet death, and worrying isn’t ; so I choose clemming, and come into the Union.’ ”

This inability to resist evil counsel, this fatal facility of temper, is the more serious in our estimation, because we do not see how it is to be cured. It is unquestionably significant of a low degree of intellectual culture ; but it is at the same time a weakness which these classes share with many far above them in social rank and educational advantages. Mere instruction does not confer strength of will and courage for individual action. The number of those in any class who dare to think and act for themselves in opposition to the more active and noisy among them is lamentably small ; and we cannot reasonably expect it to be greater among uneducated operatives than elsewhere, though perhaps in no rank does it produce more sad results.

There are several minor points in which the authoress of “ Mary Barton ” has laid herself open to serious criticism, which want of space compels us to pass by. Two, however, we must notice. The first is the countenance she gives to the trite and shallow error, that labour is a curse,—that the poor are to be pitied for the obligation to daily toil which their state imposes, and that the poor *only* are ordained to toil. These popular misconceptions, which so many writers reiterate without reflection, carry with them the seeds of much mischief. The very expression so commonly em-

ployed—“*condemned to labour*”—conveys a radically false view of human nature. It implants in the mind of the poor man the idea that the condition of his existence is a hardship; and in the mind of the rich the still more fatal fallacy, that idleness is a dignity and a privilege. Two worse errors could scarcely take possession of the popular mind; and probably the greatest service rendered by Mr. Carlyle to the cause of social truth and progress, is due to the vigour with which he has attacked them, and has vindicated the happiness and the nobility of labour. The doctrine that the necessity of labour is a blessing, and not a curse, cannot be insisted upon too strongly. It is to this very necessity that mankind owes not only its first redemption from the savage state, but every step of its advance in a civilisation, from which, we trust, a great deal more may be expected still.

The misery and worthlessness of those who—exempted from the need of labouring for their daily bread—find no intellectual or social work calling on them for exertion—“the killing languor and over laboured lassitude of those who have nothing to do,”—if it could be faithfully depicted, would send back many a discontented artisan to his anvil or his loom, pacified and thankful:—

“How men would mock at Pleasure’s shows,
Her golden promise, if they knew
What weary work she is to those
Who have no better work to do!”

While, on the other hand, the severe application, the grinding anxieties of the merchant and the civil engineer, the weary eye, the exhausted brain, the shattered nerves of the statesman, the student, the lawyer, or the mathematician, would appal those on whom is laid the far easier task of manual exertion. That unremunerated toil is a heavy weird, no man will

deny; but this is probably rarer among daily labourers than among any other class. That toil so unremitting as to wear out the frame, and leave no leisure for domestic enjoyments or for intellectual culture, is a sore evil, is no less unquestionable; but it is an evil shared in this country by nearly all classes. Those who do not work at all, none but a worthless sluggard will envy; and those who work, either with the hand or brain, whether lawyers, senators, merchants, or operatives, have all to work harder than is desirable. The cure for this general social evil must be sought in the gradual spread of simpler habits, and in a juster appreciation of the great objects of our being. But, that the poor have any *special* reason to complain of excessive toil,—far less, that they are entitled to murmur because daily labour is their lot in life—is a statement to which we can never subscribe; since we believe it to be anything but true. What says one of their kindest hearted friends?—

“ Heart of the People!— Working men!
 Marrow and nerve of human powers;
 Who on your sturdy backs sustain
 Through streaming Time this world of ours;

“ Hold by that title— which proclaims
 That ye are undismayed and strong,
 Accomplishing whatever aims
 May to the sons of earth belong.

“ Yet not on ye alone depend
 These offices, or burdens fall;
 Labour, for some or other end,
 Is lord and master of us all.

* * * *

“ Then in content possess your hearts,
 Unenvious of each other's lot;
 For those which seem the easiest parts
 Have travail which ye reckon not.

“ And he is bravest, happiest, best,
Who, from the task within his span,
Earns for himself his evening rest,
And an increase of good for man.”

The second of the two faults in “ Mary Barton,” to which we have referred, is this. There is an impression left by it upon the mind—an impression, too, which is the legitimate and inevitable result of the statements and the descriptions it contains—which yet is entirely unfounded and unjust. It would be impossible for any one to read “ Mary Barton,” and take from it his opinion of the relations between rich and poor in the manufacturing towns, without coming to the conclusion (even if it were not distinctly asserted, as at page 120. of the first volume, and elsewhere,) that there exists an entire want of kindly feeling between them,—that the sufferings of the operatives are generally disregarded by their employers, and that no effort is made to relieve them, even in times of the severest pressure. Now every one acquainted with the districts in question will bear us out, when we affirm that no representation can be further from the truth. The writer sinks, as if ignorant of them—and we hope she is,—a whole class of facts, of which, however, it is scarcely possible that she should have been totally uninformed. For it is notorious, that in no town are there better organised or more efficient charities than in Manchester. Besides the usual medical institutions, infirmaries, dispensaries, eye-hospitals, lying-in-hospitals, &c.,—which are unusually numerous and accessible—there is a district visiting society (and it has been in operation many years) which would render the unknown and unrelieved existence of such distress, as is described in the case of the Davenports, almost impossible. In the two periods of severest distress which have been known of late years, in 1842 and 1847,—when, owing to the stagnation of trade, many

operatives were partially, and some wholly, unemployed—the most vigorous efforts were made by the philanthropic of all classes, to bring relief home to every poor man's door. In 1842, soup kitchens were open for eight months; soup and rice to the extent of 800 gallons were distributed—affording relief to about 4000 persons daily. In 1847, nearly double the amount was subscribed for the same purpose; and from 6000 to 8000 individuals received gratuitously, for many months, daily rations of bread and soup. At Stockport, a much smaller town, and one almost exclusively inhabited by master manufacturers and their workmen, the amount of subscriptions raised during the distress of 1842 was 4200*l.*, besides several hundred tons of coal which were distributed among the poor; and for several months, the average number of individuals relieved every week exceeded 14,000. Similar assistance was afforded with equal liberality in Bolton, Bury, and most other towns. In addition to this, master manufacturers, in many instances, distributed to their unemployed people large quantities of soup and flour for months together,—doing all indeed that the nature of the case possibly admitted of. Nor were the masters, of whom we are speaking, men of uncommon benevolence. In fact, we do not believe that any manufacturers could be found (unless, perhaps, some few of the neediest and most uneducated) who did not attend, at once and gladly, to any application for assistance from their own people—even where they might not take the initiative in searching out cases of privation. We have good reason to believe, also, that there are very few reputable families among the factory operatives, who have not some friends among the upper classes to whom they could apply on such an occasion. That a steady and religious family like the Davenports, could have fallen into the state of helpless and squalid wretchedness which the authoress

has depicted, no one acquainted with the poor of Manchester will easily believe; or that families like the Bartons and the Wilsons would not have been readily assisted in the time of want by their former employers. Therefore we say, that in so resolutely ignoring all the kindness felt for the people, and all the willing and anxious assistance rendered to them by their employers, the authoress of "Mary Barton" has done grievous injustice to a whole class,—has most inconsiderately fostered the ill-opinion of them known to exist in certain quarters—and has, unintentionally no doubt, but most unfortunately, flattered both the prejudices of the aristocracy, and the passions of the populace.

The basis of the book—the master idea which pervades it—is the old dispute between capital and labour—as to the *distribution* of that wealth which is the joint production of the two. The operative is represented as utterly bewildered by seeing his employer, to all appearance, steadily and rapidly advancing in the world, in spite of the vicissitudes of trade; while he himself, in consequence of those vicissitudes, is left to struggle, and often to struggle in vain, for daily bread. He is said to be disgusted and enraged at that *unequal division* of the profits of their combined exertions, in which alone he can find the explanation of this irritating difference in their lot. Now, it is unquestionably true that this feeling does exist in the minds of many operatives; though the intensity and the prevalence of it are both exaggerated. It is manifest, too, that the writer before us shares in the feeling; and recent publications have shown that it is shared also by economists and thinkers of a far higher order. In fact, this "vehement and bitter cry of labour against capital,"* for a fairer divi-

* Mr. Macaulay has given us a curious specimen (Hist of Eng. vol. i. p. 419.) of this in an old ballad, which was popular in the

sion of profits, is as old as society itself, and will endure as long—because it arises from that principle in human nature which must always make every man an unjust judge and an unfair distributor in his own cause. It is rarely, indeed, that two parties can be satisfied by the most equitable distribution of any spoil. The existence, therefore, of the alleged feeling of discontent among the manufacturing operatives, is not even *primâ facie* evidence that the discontent is well founded. Still, the opinion that it is so is so widely spread, and suggestions of plans to remedy the supposed inequitable apportionment of the profits of manufacturing industry have of late received the sanction of such high authority, that we must devote a short space to an attempt to put the matter in a practical and proper light.

The theory of the case may be thus briefly stated:—The capitalist and the workman *are*, no doubt, joint agents—co-operators—partners, in fact—in the production of a certain article (say cotton cloth), and joint sharers in the profits arising out of its sale. The capitalist supplies funds, machinery, and superintendence; the workman supplies handicraft, skill, and manual labour. At the end of the year, or of some shorter period, the net returns are to be divided be-

time of Charles II. “The master clothier is satirically introduced, —declaring, that

“ ‘In former ages we used to give,
So that our workfolks like farmers did live;
But the times are changed, we will make them to know.

* * * * *

We will make them to work hard for sixpence a day,
Tho’ a shilling they deserve, if they had their just pay;
If at all they murmur, and say ’tis too small,
We bid them choose whether they’ll work at all.
And thus we do gain all our wealth and estate,
By many poor men that work early and late.’ ”

tween them, in a proportion either formally agreed upon, or tacitly decided by custom.

But the labourer is a poor man—he has no stores in his cupboard, and no money in his purse. He must purchase food, clothing, and shelter from day to day; and therefore cannot wait till the end of the year to receive his share of the common gain. The capitalist, therefore, should advance to him what it is thought probable that his share will amount to—*minus*, perhaps, the interest on the advance; and, possibly, some further small deduction to compensate the risk of having over-estimated the workman's share.

But further: the results of a manufacturing enterprise are sometimes not profit but loss—always occasional loss—frequently loss for years together—sometimes even loss on the whole. But the workman who could not bear to wait, can still less bear his share of loss; the capitalist, therefore, has to encounter all the losses, for he cannot call upon the labourer to refund the wages he has received.

The original compact (tacit or formal) by which the division of profits would have been otherwise determined, has thus become modified, *for the convenience of the workman*, into the form in which we at present see it. The workman receives his share of the profits *before* any profits are made; he receives his share in years in which no profit is made; he receives it in years when profits are changed into losses; he receives it sometimes when his master is being gradually ruined in the partnership, which—if he be but prudent—will have enriched *him*. What deductions from his original share should be made in consideration of all these predicates? It is evident that, in common justice, he cannot expect to receive as much as if he waited till profits were realised, and bore his proportion of losses when losses were incurred.

The workman's wages then, are his share of the profits commuted into a fixed payment. This commuted share he is secure of receiving as long as the manufacturing enterprise in which he is engaged actually goes on. The capitalist alone endures all the losses, alone furnishes all the advances, alone encounters the risk of ruin, and receives only that share of profit which may remain over, after the labourer's "commuted share" is paid. The workman's share is a first mortgage, the capitalist's share is only a reversionary claim.

When these matters are duly weighed, and when, in connection with them, the history and the fluctuations of that trade, in the great centre of which the scene of "Mary Barton" is laid, are dispassionately considered, we do not believe that any man, whether operative or not, could conscientiously come to the conclusion, that the master manufacturers—abusing their advantages in the labour-market—have generally engrossed a larger proportion of profit than of right belongs to them. It is a great, though natural mistake, to think only of the masters who succeed. But we have the very recent fact before us, that in the year 1847, hundreds among them lost at one blow the earnings of many previous years of patient and plodding industry. We know how many have become bankrupts; and how many more have compounded with their creditors, during the disastrous fluctuations of the last twelve years. We have many examples, too, not only of masters who became poor, but of operatives who became rich; and stepped into the class of masters, by savings out of their wages,—their "commuted share" of profit. (The Mr. Carson of the present story is represented as one of these: we are told that he and George Wilson were at one time rival candidates for the hand of the same young woman.) We have the evidence (see the "Report of a Committee of the House

of Lords upon Burdens on Land") of one of the largest manufacturers, that the average profits of the cotton trade during the last twenty years were little more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the capital employed. We have the fact, notorious in the manufacturing districts, that many of the wealthiest spinners are wealthy only because they annually lay by a large sum, not out of the present profits of their business, but out of the interest of their capital. And, finally, we have the very significant fact, that the operatives themselves, whenever asked to specify the proportion of profit which they imagine their masters to obtain, and which they would themselves assign to them for their capital and superintendence under a co-operative system, invariably (we believe) name a far larger proportion than is actually realised, except in cases of singular good fortune. The following evidence, given some years ago by a very intelligent agitator among them, is very instructive. He was desirous that a number of workmen should combine their savings, and start a mill on their own account, on the co-operative system; and, after some conversation as to the feasibility of the scheme in its preliminary arrangements, he is asked,—

“Supposing, then, all difficulties as to capital overcome, a proper building erected, proper machinery obtained, and all contentions as to which of the co-operatives should take the best, and which the worst and most irksome labour, settled, and proper subordination obtained, there still comes the business of buying the raw material; and, next, that of selling the manufactured product;—a business, you will admit, requiring much skill, promptly applied, to guard against loss or bankruptcy. How would you that a committee should transact such business in the market?—For that business it might undoubtedly be expedient that they should select some skilful and trustworthy person.

“Who—having a large capital and the success of the undertaking in his hand, and being open to the temptations of embezzlement, or to large bribes on the betrayal of his trust,—

you would perhaps think it right should be well paid, to diminish those temptations?—Certainly, I see no objections to that; he ought to be well paid.

“That being so, what would you, an operative capitalist, be willing to give to such a person for the management of your 100*l.* share productively, for obtaining and superintending the fitting machinery, selecting and buying skilfully the raw commodity, and selling the manufactured produce, without any labour or care on your part?—I have never considered the subject in that point of view, and can hardly say; but I should think 4*l.* or 5*l.* a year (or 4 to 5 per cent.) would not be unreasonable. I should not object to that.

“It may surprise you, and it is well that you, and the respectable mechanics engaged in this branch of manufacture, should know, that the service spoken of is all rendered to them for one half,—now, indeed, when trade is depressed, for less than one fourth,—of that sum which you, and perhaps they, would deem a fair remuneration. That the 100*l.* capital is furnished, the building erected, the machinery chosen and supplied, the raw material purchased, the labour in working it up directed, the markets vigilantly attended, and the sales of the manufactured article faithfully made at the best price, and without any care or thought on their parts; and that the manufacturer who does all this, is well satisfied with a remuneration of 40*s.* or 50*s.* per cent. per annum.”*

It is the opinion of several most able thinkers among them, as also of Mr. Babbage and Mr. Mill, that a better feeling would be promoted between operatives and their employers, and the interests of both materially promoted, by some arrangement which should render the former more *obviously* sharers in the profits of manufacturing enterprise, and more promptly affected by the fluctuations of those profits, than they are under the present system;—by some plan, in fact, of paying them *a portion only* of their earnings in the form of fixed wages, *as advances on account*, and the

* Evidence of Rowland Detrosier. First Report of Constabulary Force Commissioners, p. 156.

remainder at the end of the year, out of the profits when actually realised. Some of the most intelligent and benevolent of our great employers of labour, have turned their attention to the same subject,—and have even made practical experiments upon it. Now, we admit at once that such a plan, if practicable, would be most desirable for the interests of both parties; and that the master manufacturer would certainly not be the party least benefited by its adoption. We have considered all that Mr. Mill has written on the subject in his recent invaluable work, with the attention due to everything which he puts forth; and with the prepossession which we always have that so profound and dispassionate a thinker must be right; and we have discussed the matter with experienced men of practice, under the sincerest desire to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. But we are obliged to declare that the difficulties of the scheme seem to us insuperable.

The legal impediments we pass over at once, because these are remediable by legislation. But a practical difficulty meets us *in limine*. If the workmen already receive in the form of wages their full and due proportion of the common gain—and we have expressed our conviction that this is the case—then it is evident that they can only become sharers in the distribution of the annual profits, by foregoing a portion of their present fixed salaries. They must receive their share of the profits *in lieu of, not in addition to*, the whole or a part of their weekly wages. The first step to the proposed arrangement must, therefore, be an immediate reduction of the weekly payment to the workmen. Now, the men who would submit to such a diminution of their present certain earnings, for the sake of a fluctuating and uncertain, though, it might be, larger, addition to their future receipts, we believe to be few indeed. Under these circumstances, the objection to the conversion of

the operatives from the condition of salaried servants to that of real partners, would, we are convinced, come from the operatives themselves.

In the second place,—supposing this first difficulty to be surmounted,—what must be done in years of loss, especially when those years of loss occur two or three in succession? These years of manufacturing losses are generally years of a high price of food. Under a partnership system, therefore, the operative would find himself with diminished earnings and increased expenditure, aggravated by the proportion of loss which, at the end of the year, would fall to his share, and which—as he would probably have no means of meeting it—must remain as a debt due from him to his employer, to be repaid when profitable years recurred. The repayment of this debt, which would come before him in this naked form, viz. that his master was realising large profits whilst he was gaining nothing, but simply obliterating an old debt, would create endless dissatisfaction and ill-will; and would, we are certain, lead to a far worse state of feeling between the parties than exists at present. Moreover, it is to be doubted whether the substitution of fluctuating and uncertain for regular earnings, would not rather tend to promote a spirit of gambling and improvidence. We fear that the partnership system demands a degree of moral and social progress, which our manufacturing population, clever and intelligent as they are, are yet far from having attained.

In the third place, the plan could not be made to *work*. Putting aside the difficulties which would arise in the case we have supposed, of a workman in debt to his master, perhaps for years together, and the consequent disputes and recriminations which could scarcely fail to arise as to who was responsible for the bad success of the undertaking;—passing over the discouragement of the workman, and his constant temptation to cancel

his debt by changing his master, we must not forget, when we come to regard the question with a view to practice, that a factory employs on an average about 500 workpeople. Of these many are *floating*, come and go as the whim seizes them; some remaining a few months, others only a few weeks. How could *their* interests be fairly arranged on the partnership plan? Then, several of the people are careless, lazy, or drunken, and require to be summarily dismissed. But how could you dismiss men who have a reserved claim on the profits of the concern?

It is, no doubt, quite possible, and even easy, to give to some of *the principal workmen* employed in factories, the foremen of the various departments for example, a certain per centage of the yearly profits, in addition to their fixed salary. And this is a plan by no means unfrequently adopted by employers, for the sake of stimulating the care and zeal of those on whom so much depends. But even in these cases, though the men are select and highly educated in comparison with their fellows, no attempt is ever made, we believe, to make them sharers in *losses* as well as in gains. The share they receive is simply an additional salary or bonus, given when the business is profitable; is, in fact, neither more nor less than an advance in wages, withdrawn when the capitalist can no longer afford to give it.

On the whole, therefore, we incline to the belief that the present system of commuting the workman's share of the common profits into a fixed weekly stipend, though not, perhaps, theoretically the most perfect, is, at least, the one which, under the circumstances, is the most beneficial to him, and the only one which is at present practicable. If it does not give him the same interest in his work which a formal partnership might do, it secures to him regular and ample earnings; and greatly tends to evade that heart-burning animosity and

those perpetual disputes, which any other arrangement could scarcely fail to produce.* Under it, we are satisfied that the workman *does* receive his fair share, if not more than his fair share, of the profits actually realised; and if he expends them with a due regard to economy, he will in a few years—as a general rule—be able to amass a sum which would enable him to become a capitalist while remaining a workman,—and thus realise some of the benefits of both conditions.

The introduction of the continental law which permits partnerships *en commandite*, as they are called, or partnerships with limited liability on the part of the inferior shareholders, would greatly facilitate this result. We quote Mr. Mill's account of this law.

“The other kind of limited partnership which demands our attention, is that in which the managing partner or partners are responsible, with their whole fortunes, for the engagements of the concern, but have others associated with them who contribute only definite sums, and are not liable for anything beyond, though they participate in the profits according to any rule that may be agreed upon. This is called partnership *en commandite*; and the partners with limited liability, to whom, by the French law, all interference in the management of the concern is interdicted, are called *commanditaires*. Such partnerships are not permitted by the English law; whoever shares in the profits is liable for the debts to as plenary an extent as the managing partner. For such prohibition no rational defence has ever, so far as I am aware, been made.” — *Mill's Pol. Econ.*, vol. ii. p. 465.

We have already, we fear, overstepped our limits, and with one or two remarks more, we will conclude.

* It must be noticed that most of the workmen in factories have already a direct interest in the work, arising from being paid by *the work done*, not by the *day*.

"Mary Barton" is called a tale of Manchester life; its scenes are principally laid there, and its characters — masters and men — are manufacturers. But the fearful contrasts between rich and poor, which it is the great object of the story to depict and darken, together with the moral lessons which the delineations are intended to convey, have long been common to town and country. The chasm which separates the employer and the employed, is at least as wide, we apprehend, in Dorsetshire as in Lancashire. Lazarus lies at the gate of Dives in both places—by the park palings of the squire, as well as on the hall-steps of the cotton lord—and the temptations and provocations—the seeds out of which Esthers and John Bartons grow—undoubtedly abound in both, though not perhaps quite to the same extent. We cannot need a Crabbe to come again to tell us this. There was nothing in the extremity of their Manchester destitution, which the Davenports, immigrants from Buckinghamshire, are described as dreading so much, as to be sent back to their rural home.

Some improbabilities, too, take off considerably from our pleasure in these volumes. We cannot believe that the long coquetting of the heroine, Mary Barton, a weaver's daughter, and apprenticed to a milliner, with Henry Carson, a young master manufacturer, and one of the beaux of Manchester—still less her long ill-usage of her rough and faithful lover, Jem Wilson, and her sudden and passionate devotion to him—are consistent with the sense and spirit all along attributed to her. And though there are many forms in which the devil, "out of our weakness and our melancholy, abuses us to damn us," we do not think that the manly and tender nature of John Barton should have been made answerable for his perdition. But in concluding, we must again express our sense of the surpassing literary merit of the work, and our conviction also, that both its value

and its chance of lasting popularity would have been far greater, had the writer endeavoured to represent the real position of the operative classes, rather than the inaccurate and distorted view of that position, as taken by the sour and envious among them; had she, while depicting the distress and privation which they are so often called upon to endure, drawn attention also to those intellectual and moral deficiencies by which this distress is so often caused or aggravated; had she dealt out one measure of kindness and severity to the rich and poor; and had she spoken of the bitter and malignant feelings she has dramatised, less as sharing and excusing them, than as perceiving and deploring their injustice. We yield to none in a hearty appreciation of, indeed a fellow-feeling with, the *workers* in every country and of every denomination; but we would show that sympathy—not in idly mourning over sorrows which are common to all ranks, nor in weeping at distresses for which, as for all human evils, there is a compensation and a cure, but — by calling on all our fellow-labourers to brace up their souls for sterner endurance and for hardier exertion; by exhorting them to carry with them through all trials, as their sword and shield, the settled faith that they, and no man else, must do their own work; that the blessings of comfort, independence, and security, are not to be mendicated from others, but to be achieved for themselves; that these inestimable blessings are the promised and the sure rewards of steady industry, of resolute frugality, of reflection that “looks before and after”; that, in fine—to quote the language of a great poet—neither the humble nor the powerful must stoop to ask at the hands of others—

“A gift of that which is not to be *given*
By all the blended powers of earth and heaven.”

INVESTMENTS FOR THE WORKING CLASSES.*

WE have often had occasion to remark on the obstacles and perplexities, the hidden perils, the opposing risks, the surprising and unforeseen dilemmas, which beset the path of active beneficence, especially when attempted on a great scale. The difficulty of doing good is at least equal to its luxury. To the conscientious and the thoughtful the path of philanthropy is one of briars and thorns. On the one hand lies the shame and reproach of witnessing a vast accumulation of misery without an effort to relieve it: on the other the danger—ever more clearly apprehended in proportion as our experience is wide and our inquiries deep—of aggravating the evil we attempt to mitigate. On the one side lies the sin of the Levite who looks upon the wounded and bleeding victim, and passes by, either in shrinking sensibility or in sheer despair: on the other lies the risk, from ignorance or incaution, of pouring in oil which shall cause the wounds to fester, and wine which shall stimulate the fever. It is no easy matter to steer between Scylla

* From the "Edinburgh Review."

1. *Report of the Select Committee appointed to consider and suggest Means for facilitating safe Investments for the Savings of the Middle and Working Classes.* Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, July, 1850.

2. *Report of Select Committee on the Law of Partnership.* Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, July, 1851.

3. *Partnership en Commandite.* London: 1848.

4. *Industrial Investments and Emigration.* By ARTHUR SCRATCHLEY. 2nd Edition. London: 1851.

5. *Law of Partnership and the Investment of the Savings of the Poor.* By H. BELLENDEN KER, Esq. London: 1850.

and Charybdis; and we should deal gently with the pilot—if only he be cautious and modest—who, in shunning one peril, incurs shipwreck from the other.

Sometimes, however, cases will occur to philanthropic effort, in which the preponderance of good is so evident and so great as to throw any casual and transient mischief into the shade, and make it of no account. Sometimes, too, a line of action suggests itself, in which, by a moderate amount of care, much benevolent service may be done without the violation of any moral principle or economic rule, and, therefore, without the risk of any counter-balancing harm which we are called upon to foresee. The providing and pointing out of safe and profitable investments for the savings of the frugal and industrious among the humbler classes seems to be one of these. It combines all the requisites and avoids nearly all the prohibitions which mark out the legitimate path of philanthropic aid. It interferes with no individual action: it saps no individual self-reliance. It prolongs childhood by no proffered leading-strings: it valetudinarianises energy by no hedges or walls of defence, no fetters of well-meant paternal restriction. It encourages virtue and forethought by no artificial incitements, but simply by providing that they shall not be debarred from full fructification, nor defrauded of their natural reward. It does not attempt to foster the infant habit of saving by the unnatural addition of a penny to every penny laid by*: it contents itself

* Savings' Banks are said to owe their rise to the Rev. Joseph Smith, of Wendover, who, in 1799, circulated proposals in his parish to receive any sums in deposit during the summer, and to return the amount at Christmas, with the addition of one third to the sum, as a bounty or reward for the forethought of the depositor. This was clearly not a Savings' Bank according to what is now understood by the term; neither could such a plan, if ever so extensively followed out—and it does not appear probable that Mr.

with endeavouring to secure to the poor and inexperienced that safe investment and that reasonable return for their small economies which is their just and scanty due, and which the better education and wider means of the rich enable them to command.

The custom of hoarding and laying by is no new one in any country; but the form which it has assumed, and the extent to which it has now reached, may well surprise us. Formerly the savings of the poor used to be sewed up in an old stocking, and hid in the thatch or under the hearthstone; and this habit still survives to a great extent in Ireland. But now thousands of societies of every form and constitution receive the savings of hundreds of thousands of depositors, and reckon their accounts by millions. The degree to which this virtue is carried among the working poor, and the class immediately above them, is one of the most hopeful social features of our times; and when we reflect on the severe discouragement, both direct and indirect, which it has met with, both from the system of poor laws, which in times of prolonged pressure placed the frugal and hoarding operatives at so demoralising a disadvantage; and also from the frauds and defalcations of Benefit Societies and Savings' Banks, which have so often deprived them of the small sums scraped together by the industry and self-denial of many years—there is increased reason both for congratulation and astonishment. Of the actual aggregate amount which the savings of the humbler classes have now reached we know something, but are obliged to guess at much more. In 1830, the number of individual depositors in savings' banks was 412,217, and the amount of their deposits 13,507,565*l*. In No-

Smith could have many imitators—be the means of causing any but temporary savings; the very bounty given would ensure the withdrawal of the deposits, and probably the disbursement of the money.
—*Porter's Progress of the Nation*, vol. iii. p. 142.

vember, 1849, the depositors were 1,065,031, and their deposits reached 26,671,903*l.* In November, 1850, the depositors were 1,092,581, and their deposits reached 27,198,563*l.* According to Mr. Scratchley there were in 1849, 10,433 *enrolled* Friendly Societies, numbering 1,600,000 members, who subscribe an annual revenue of 2,800,000*l.*, and have accumulated a capital fund of 6,400,000*l.* There are also a vast number of unenrolled Societies. Of the Manchester Unity there are 4000 societies, with 264,000 members, who subscribe 400,000*l.* a year. In addition there are the unenrolled Foresters, Druids, &c. &c. The total is taken at 33,223 Societies, with 3,052,000 members, who subscribe 4,980,000*l.* a year, and have a capital fund of 11,360,000*l.* The whole adult male population of the United Kingdom may be taken at about 7,000,000: nearly half of these, therefore, without distinction of rich or poor, are actually members of some of these Societies.

It is difficult to estimate too highly the importance of this tendency to amass, or the duty of removing every obstacle, and affording every facility to its operation. It is matter of deep interest to the state; for the man who has invested a portion of his earnings in securities, to the permanence and safety of which the peace and good order of society are essential, will be a tranquil and conservative citizen. It is matter of deep interest to the moralist: because the soil in which providence and frugality have flourished is a soil favourable to many other virtues. It is matter of deep interest to the social philosopher; for the trenchant line of demarcation between labourers and capitalists—so far more strongly marked in England than elsewhere—is believed by many to be at the root of nearly all, and is allowed by most to be at the root of many, of the most difficult and painful anomalies which meet our view as we look out on the community around us. To

have saved money and invested it securely, is to have become a capitalist; is to have stepped out of the category of the *prolétaires* into that of the proprietors; and to have deserted the wide and desolate multitude of those who *have not*, for the more safe and reputable companionship of those who *have*. To have become a capitalist is, for the poor man, to have overleaped a great gulf; to have opened a path for himself into a new world; to have started on a career which may lead him, as it has led so many originally not more favoured by fortune than himself, to comfort, to reputation, to wealth, to power. In proportion to the value and dignity of this step, is it important to make it easy and secure: in that proportion is it the duty of the state to see that there shall be no needless or artificial impediments to the safe keeping and the profitable employment of the first small beginnings of a stream which may swell into such a mighty flood of fertilising waters; and sedulously to take heed that no channel in which it can flow without waste or danger shall be closed to it. It is not for the legislature to contrive that the guinea of the rich man and the penny of the poor man shall yield an equal revenue: it *is* for the legislature diligently to see to it, that by no act, connivance, or negligence of theirs, shall this desirable result be hindered. As it is, many such impediments exist: society has developed and industry expanded too fast for legislative watchfulness and wisdom to keep pace with them. We have been slow to meet new necessities with new provisions; and the consequence is that arrangements and enactments, fitted for other times but unsuitable for these, have a hampering operation which was neither intended nor foreseen; and circumstances and interests have been suffered to grow up, for the free development and adequate security of which no due provision has been made.

The practical discouragements to the virtue of economy which have resulted from the absence of this due provision, can be appreciated only by those who have come into close contact with the operative poor. Every defaulting savings' bank—every absconding treasurer to a sick club or a friendly society—every bankrupt railway—every fraudulent or clumsy building league—every chimerical or mismanaged land association—preaches a sermon on the folly of frugality and providence, not soon forgotten and not easily counteracted. Of late these lessons have multiplied with fearful rapidity, and been delivered with a most mischievous emphasis. "Why should I save?" (asks the jovial footman). "My fellow-servant, the butler, pinched himself in every conceivable fashion, earned the character of a niggard and a miser, that he might store up a couple of hundred pounds, to set up a shop and marry upon. He invested it in the Rochdale Savings' Bank: the manager made away with 90,000*l.* of the funds intrusted to him; the trustees, it seems, are not answerable for the defalcations; and I have now the satisfaction of knowing that my fellow-servant is as poor as myself, and that all his long years of self-denial are thrown away." Truly, as Solomon says, "The wise man's eyes are in his head, and the fool walketh in darkness; *yet one event happeneth to them all.*"—"I have done with economy" (says the plodding clerk with his 200*l.* a year); "I rose early, went to bed late, and was contented with the scantiest fare: I invested my hard earnings in the Midland Railway Consols at 190*l.*—then the most reputed line in the kingdom. Now 150*l.* of this is gone, and by no fault of mine;—while my companion—who took his ease, ate, drank, and was merry, never thought of the morrow, never tasked his strength, or denied himself any recreation—jeers me from morning till night." And he, too, quotes from the

same Hebrew fountain of disheartening and melancholy wisdom. "There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and make his soul enjoy good in his labour."—"You have been advising me for some years, sir," (said a factory artisan to us the other day) "to lay by some money against sickness or old age. Well, I took your advice; I saved, week by week, about 50*l.*, and subscribed the money to Feargus O'Connor's land scheme, which was to secure me a cottage and a few acres of ground for my old age;—and I am now told, not only that I may never get them, but that if I do, I cannot live upon them; and that, moreover, Mr. O'Connor may, if he pleases, keep all my money for himself. I wish I had never saved a farthing."—Now these cases are neither imaginary nor few. They come before us in scores, in hundreds, in thousands; and are terribly eloquent in praise of self-indulgence and improvidence.

The double complaint, then, made by the humbler classes, or on their behalf, is, that sufficient care has not been taken to render safe such modes of investment as are peculiarly open to their small means, and that from other investments which are profitable and desirable, they are debarred by impediments which have either been created, or might easily be removed, by legislative interference. We propose to examine some of these cases, and to point out a few of those arrangements or alterations in our law which it seems just to ask for, and desirable to grant, in order that the working classes may be at liberty, fully and practically, to employ their savings in whatever manner they please, provided only that it be not inconsistent with the general interests of the community.

The first and simplest mode of disposing of small savings is to invest them in some quarter in small sums and at simple interest, with liberty of withdrawal at the

will of the depositor. Such an investment is afforded by Savings' Banks, which date from the beginning of the century, and were originally established by benevolent individuals for the direct purpose of taking charge of weekly or monthly sums of a smaller amount than ordinary banks — in England at least — were willing to charge themselves with. These institutions were sanctioned by act of parliament in the reign of George IV.; and by arrangements then established, and subsequently slightly modified, all sums paid into savings' banks are to be invested in Government securities, and to receive interest at the rate of 3 per cent. At the same time, in order to prevent their being diverted from their original design, of providing ready reception for the savings of the poor, no individual is allowed to deposit more than 150*l.* in all, nor more than 30*l.* in any one year; and when his deposits amount, with compound interest, to 200*l.*, no further interest is to be paid to him; it being very properly presumed that for so large a sum a more suitable investment may easily be found; or at all events that the owner of such a sum is no longer entitled to the privileges of poverty. The extent to which these institutions have been made use of — the amount standing to the credit of individual depositors having at one time reached to nearly twenty-nine millions — shows the wide prevalence of the want which they were established to meet, and the value set upon the facilities they offer. Of late, however, much distress and mistrust have arisen from the numerous, and apparently simultaneous, defalcations which occurred in many of them. In 1849 and 1850, the treasurers of several savings' banks, both here and in Ireland, were discovered to have employed for their private purposes the funds intrusted to them, instead of placing them, as legally bound to do, in the hands of the Bank of England for investment in the Funds. Hundreds of

the poor and industrious found themselves thus suddenly deprived of their painfully-hoarded savings by the dishonesty of officers whom they had been taught to trust with implicit confidence, and whom they seemed justified in so trusting. It then became known, to the surprise of most, and the dismay of all, that the trustees of these savings' banks—gentlemen, generally, of wealth, benevolence, and repute in their respective neighbourhoods—were in no way legally responsible for the money which had been intrusted to their keeping, and that government, which was popularly supposed to be the recipient of all the deposits the moment they were paid into the bank, was, naturally enough, answerable only for the sums which it had actually received. The treasurer, a clerk appointed by the local trustees, was, in fact, discovered to be the only party responsible for the safe keeping of the deposits; and he was the very man who had made away with them. It is true that he had to find sureties before obtaining his appointment; but these sureties, though sufficient to make good the loss of any temporary balance which might remain in his hands, were seldom adequate to meet defalcations arising from continuous and systematic fraud.

These painful disclosures—so many of which occurred about the same time—not only created a very general and well-warranted feeling of insecurity on the part of the depositors in savings' banks, and greatly shook the credit of these institutions, but induced a pretty unanimous expression of public opinion that the people had not been quite fairly dealt with in the matter; and that those parties, on the faith of whose character for vigilance and integrity the poor had committed their little property to the banks of which they were the nominal managers and trustees, ought not to be thus exempt from all legal responsibility. The people naturally asked: "To whom did we intrust the money, if not to

the gentlemen whose names were published as managers of the institution, and to the government, which, we were told, had, by act of parliament, constituted itself receiver of the funds? As to the receiving clerk, we did not appoint him; we knew nothing of him; and we never conceived that we were to look upon him as our banker."* So general was the disgust at this slippery and inadequate arrangement, and so just was it felt to be, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer last year introduced a bill into the House of Commons to enable the government to take upon itself the charge of the safe keeping of all deposits in savings' banks, on condition of having the appointment of the treasurer who should receive them, without claiming to interfere in any other manner with the local arrangements. By this plan every individual would virtually have paid his instalments directly into the hands of the nation, and his mite would have been as secure as national wealth and honour could make it. On the part of the trustees and local managers, however, the bill, which would perfectly have attained the object in view, met with a jealous opposition, which we forbear to characterise by its fitting adjective: it was *alleged* that it cast a stigma on their reputation for integrity: it was *felt* that it would deprive them of a

* "I was in Lancashire some time ago, meeting with large bodies of working men, at the time of the failure of the Rochdale Savings' Bank; and I shall not soon forget some remarks that were made about the government, as to the want of security. One man in Ashton-under-Line, said, 'Dr. M'Dowall came here and told us that the government was a set of robbers; that they did not care about the property of working men. I did not believe M'Dowall then; but when I see that there is no security for the savings of the working men in the Savings' Banks, which we supposed that the government had under their protection, I believe now that M'Dowall was right, and that government cares nothing about either the poor men or their savings.'" — *Mr. W. Cooper's Evidence, Committee on Investment.* Q. 586.

certain amount of patronage and local influence; and these miserable pleas were so vehemently urged, that government thought it better to abandon the bill than to risk the breaking up of the institutions altogether, as they were scarcely prepared to take them entirely into their own hands. The matter cannot, however, rest here; and we trust that Sir C. Wood's promise to legislate on the subject next session will be acted on, either by himself or his present successor. It is of the greatest importance that the question should be settled without delay, and that the public should know distinctly to whom they are to look for the safe keeping of their hard-won savings. When this is once arranged on an intelligible and satisfactory basis, these institutions may have before them a career of long-continued and increasing usefulness.

Next in order come Friendly Societies, Sick Clubs, and the like, which are institutions of mutual assurance against incapacity arising from casualty, sickness, or old age. Each member contributes a certain sum weekly, monthly, or annually, while employed and in health, and receives from the Society in return a certain pension or allowance when age, accident, or illness deprives him of his usual maintenance. Nothing, it is obvious, can be more unobjectionable than the principle of these associations, or more beneficial than their operation, when conducted upon sound and just rules. The rapid and vast extension of them indicate that the working classes have a clear perception of the mighty strength and security which lie hid in the principle of association. Comforts far beyond the reach of their individual means, provisions against possible or probable contingencies, which would overwhelm them if isolated units, are, through the instrumentality of these institutions, brought within the power of the poorest among them. Next to

Trades' Unions, of which the object is to secure some provision for times when they may be out of work, and of which we do not propose here to speak, Friendly Societies are the especial favourites of the working classes, partly because they meet the exigencies to which every man feels his own special liability, and partly also because they are their own contrivance, and the management of them lies in their own hands. Every man feels that (apart from premature death) the incapacity of old age is an evil which is certain to befall him; that accident may, and that sickness probably will, lay him upon his back at some period or other of his career:—so if he have any foresight and self denial, he willingly lays by a portion of his earnings for such inescapable emergencies. He does this the more willingly, because the rules according to which, and the officers through whom, the common fund is administered, are the selection of his own will.

In the early history of these associations, their usefulness was much impaired by errors in their constitution, and inadequacy in the legal powers needed for their self-protection. Gradually, however, both these defects have been remedied: and by successive acts of parliament, provision has been made, that any of these Societies, whose rules shall be approved of by the officer appointed by government to revise them, may be registered or enrolled, and thus become entitled to certain privileges and exemptions. An act passed last session (13 and 14 Vict. c. cxv.) consolidated a number of previous laws, and extended the purposes for which these Societies were legalised. It declared to be entitled to the benefit of its provisions, all which were established for the following objects:—

“ 1. For insuring a sum of money to be paid on the death of a member, to the widow or widower of said member; or to the child, executors, administrators, or assigns of such member;

or for defraying the expense of the burial of such member, or his wife, husband, child, or kinsman.

“2. For relief, maintenance, or endowment of members or their kindred, in infancy, old age, sickness, widowhood, or any other natural state of which the probability may be calculated by way of average.

“3. For insuring stock, &c. against damage by fire, flood, shipwreck, or other natural contingency, calculable by way of average.

“4. For the frugal investment of the savings of members, for better enabling them to purchase food, firing, clothes, or other necessaries, or the tools and materials of their trade and calling, or the education of their children and kindred; provided that the shares shall not be transferable, and that the investment and proceeds shall be confined to the member and his kindred, &c. &c.

“5. For enabling any member or his kindred to emigrate.”

The special advantages guaranteed to Societies established under this act, are as follows: That, as soon as they shall have been duly admitted and certified by the registrar* (an officer appointed for the purpose, who is to take care that their rules contain nothing illegal, irrational, or self-contradictory), the trustees who hold and invest their funds may sue and be sued in the name of the Society;—that in the case of the death, absence, incapacity, or disappearance of any of the trustees, the

* The *certified* Societies are those which grant annuities, and whose laws and scale of allowances have been examined and approved by an actuary: these may be safely trusted by investors. The other class are merely *registered*; but this registration, although entitling them to the benefit of the act, and indicating that their rules contain nothing fraudulent, absurd, or illegal, is no guarantee that they are or will remain solvent; and we are told, but have been unable to ascertain, that several Friendly Societies, duly admitted to registration, are not solvent. If this be so, it seems scarcely fair upon the people, to whom a government registration naturally conveys the idea of sanction and safety.

registrar may confirm and legalise the appointment of others without recurrence to the Court of Chancery, and may even, if needful, act as co-trustee himself;—that all disputes arising in the body itself shall be decided by and according to its own rules;—that in the case of arbitrators being appointed by the Rules, the decision of such arbitrators shall in all cases be final and binding, without appeal to courts of law or equity; and that such award can be promptly enforced, on proof, by the nearest justice of the peace;—that in case of fraud on the part of any of the members, an immediate remedy can be obtained by hearing before two justices of the peace, whose decision shall be final and conclusive;—that in case of any incorrect proceedings on the part of treasurer or trustees, the registrar can interfere by a summary and despotic order;—that the claims of these Societies upon the estate of deceased or bankrupt officers shall take precedence of all other claims;—and that payments, powers of attorney, assurances, &c., made under the act, shall be exempt from probate and stamp duty. The really valuable portion of these privileges, to which we shall have again to refer, is that which provides for a cheap, prompt, and inappellable decision in case of disputes, and remedy in case of fraud. It is a near approach to what law should be: that is, a number of individuals form themselves into an association for certain purposes, and agree to be bound by certain rules; and parliament provides that, on the performance of certain simple formalities, and on application to the proper officer, these purposes shall be strictly carried out, and these rules instantly enforced, without expense and without chicane. The enactment well deserves its popularity among the poor.

Life Assurance Policies offer one of the most important and desirable channels of investment for the savings of all classes, and one for the employment of which

every possible facility should be afforded. The custom of insuring life for the benefit of survivors, is extensively practised among the higher and middle ranks, and is now beginning to extend among the poor. It may be looked upon as one of the clearest and most imperative duties incumbent upon all who have, or expect to have, families dependent upon them, and whose income arises, not from realised property, but from their own exertions of head or hand, and will therefore expire with them. It is altogether the most serviceable invention of modern times for defeating contingency, disarming fate, and depriving casualty of its terrors. It would seem, that for the labouring poor, whose labour is their only capital, and who can rarely leave any realised property behind them, this mode of securing their wife and children against the destitution into which the death of the husband and father must otherwise almost inevitably plunge them, is peculiarly eligible. For some time, however, ignorance and mistrust on their parts, the unwillingness of the great Insuring Societies to accept such small sums as alone it was in the power of the working classes to raise, and the heavy stamp duties levied upon all policies, operated to prevent its adoption among the poor. The admission, however (under the act which we have quoted, and other preceding ones which it repealed), of mutual life assurance as one of the purposes for which Friendly Societies might be employed, has already done much to extend the practice among the humbler classes ;—the favourable provisions we have recited enabling them to escape the Stamp Act, the Probate Court, and (last not least) the lawyer ; as the power of nominating in the policy itself the recipient of the sum insured avoided the necessity of a will. One of these Societies (the Temperance and General Provident Institution) effected more policies in

a year than any two of the great offices.* It is obvious, that to the encouragement of so invaluable a disposition as was thus manifested, every possible facility should have been afforded ; but, unfortunately, the Chancellor of the Exchequer took alarm, as Chancellors are apt to do, at the possible loss to the revenue which might arise from the occasional employment of these Societies by rich men, and from the exemption also from legacy and stamp duties of so large a number of policies ; forgetting, that but for this exemption, a vast proportion of them would never have been effected at all ;—and he insisted upon the introduction of two provisions into the act in question (13 & 14 Vict. c. 115.), which, combined, have had a most restrictive and mischievous operation. In the first place, he confined the benefit of the act to

* We annex a Table which will show at once the extent to which the habit of insurance was spreading among the humbler classes, and the check given to it by the unfortunate limitation commented on in the text.

Statement of Number of Policies issued in each Year for the various Amounts as under.¹

Years.	Under 20 <i>l</i> .	20 <i>l</i> . to 50 <i>l</i> .	50 <i>l</i> . to 100 <i>l</i> .	100 <i>l</i> . to 200 <i>l</i> .	200 <i>l</i> . and upwards.	Total.
1841	16	20	29	118	72	255
1842	60	38	54	120	48	320
1843	48	31	68	156	41	344
1844	11	54	133	213	43	454
1845	23	48	149	205	65	490
1846	139	39	107	139	67	491
1847	10	18	55	117	73	273
1848	8	39	124	273	96	540
1849	56	36	154	420	244	910
1850	15	27	128	401	218	789
1st Aug. 1851	9	18	57	190	113	387
Total -	395	368	1058	2352	1080	5253

¹ United Kingdom Temperance and General Provident Institution, 39. Moorgate Street, London.

Societies which limited their policies to 100*l.* ; and by this means greatly crippled some of the most prosperous and the best conducted among them, as was fully, but vainly, represented by more than one witness, before Mr. Slaney's Committee. The proposal in the bill, as originally drawn, was to limit the policies to 200*l.* ; and even this would have had a most noxious operation, inasmuch as the necessary expenses of safe and efficient management are too great to enable a Society to be sustained by small policies only. One of these Institutions has issued upwards of 4000 policies, of amounts under 200*l.*, which it would have been found impossible to do without the aid arising from larger assurances. The second alteration was still more fatal. The new bill (clause 42.) took away the right of "nomination." Formerly, the person who was to receive the sum insured on the death of the insurer, was named in the policy, and the directors had nothing to do but to pay the money over to this individual, on proof of the decease of the one party, and the identity of the other. No will was thus required, nor any letters of administration to be taken out by executors, or by next of kin. Those who know how clumsy and incapable the poor are in these matters, how they shrink from the trouble and expense of all legal formalities, and how they in general dread the idea of making a will, which they look upon as signing their death-warrant,—will be able to form some estimate of the sad discouragement which this injudicious and shabby provision has thrown in the way of the most serviceable habit which could have been introduced among the humbler classes.* We have now

* It is true that there is a provision empowering the trustees, in case of a man dying intestate, to pay the money to the next of kin, or the lawful representative of the deceased, without letters of administration ; but this is limited to sums of 50*l.*, and still throws the trouble of *proving* kinship or executorship on the claimants.

lying before us a Letter from the Chairman of one of the most successful of these Institutions, saying:—
 “Most of the business we now do is with a higher class than formerly. As regards the difficulties we are placed in by doing away with the power of nomination, they are many and great, especially with the smaller insurers. In fact, we do not think it worth the trouble now to try and induce the mechanics, &c. to assure, knowing the expense and trouble the survivor will be at, to get what is due. The injury done to the advocates of provident habits in the lower classes, is incalculable.” Of all modes of employing small savings, there is none which we should so earnestly desire to become general among working men,—none which appears to us so deserving of the fostering care of the legislature, —none which, if universal and habitual, would do so much to diminish those cases of utter and helpless destitution which press so heavily on the resources of the community in the shape of poor-rates, and which are the fruitful parents of a long progeny of calamity and crime. It is grievous that mere revenue considerations should be suffered to step in to check and discourage a disposition so incomparably more important to national well-being, so incalculably more productive even of national wealth, than any mere financial arrangements. What would be the possible loss of even 100,000*l.* to the Exchequer, considered merely in a pecuniary point of view, in comparison with the drain and waste caused by the destitution of the thousands who are annually left widows, and whom a cheap and easy mode of life assurance might have endowed with a provision? And above all, how poor and trivial do all such pounds, shillings, and pence considerations seem, when weighed against the importance of convincing the mass of the people that the legislature regards with special favour, and will cherish with most zealous

care, all their efforts after self-dependence and self-elevation!

/ Next in importance to making a provision for a family in the case of the death of its head, comes that of providing for the old age or incapacity of the individual. Men who live by manual labour—in those departments especially in which good eyesight, skill of hand, or strength of arm is required—will, if they have due foresight, feel anxious for a provision *against the time of failing physical powers*—against the time when, from age or exhaustion, they are no longer fit for their usual occupation, and must be content either to retire from work altogether, or to accept work of a kind requiring less skill, and therefore commanding inferior remuneration./ An operative, with a fair education, and in full possession of his powers, may be excused for feeling confident that he can always find employment at wages which will support a family; but he cannot shut his eyes to the fact, that the large earnings he now obtains can only be commanded by men in the prime of life, and that the period *must* come when he will be compelled to forego them, or exchange them for the payment of inferior labour;—and it is against this time that, if he be wise, he will lay by some safe store, secure for the future, *but out of his reach for the present*; and, consequently, not liable to be encroached upon during the pressure of temporary want. This same “treasure in the distance,” a *deferred annuity* offers him; and there is scarcely any way in which an operative or mechanic, in any branch of industry, can more wisely invest his savings than in the purchase of such a future provision in the Government Funds. A very small weekly or monthly sum, regularly paid from the time he was twenty years of age, and had got into regular employment, would secure him 50*l.* a year when he was fifty years old, and began to feel the first approaches of

infirmity.* He might then plod cheerfully onward through the intervening years, with none of the grinding anxieties and fears of the workhouse which now beset him, having made himself sure of a quiet and respectable home for his old age.

Government has not been insensible to the importance of facilitating and encouraging the purchase of small deferred annuities by the poor. An act was introduced by Lord Althorp (3 & 4 Will. 4. c. 14.) to enable parties, through the instrumentality of the savings' banks, to purchase such annuities of not less than 4*l.*, nor more than 30*l.*—the annuitant to have the option of paying down the whole purchase-money at once, or by weekly, monthly, or yearly instalments. As an additional encouragement, it was provided that if the purchaser become unable to continue his payments, or died before the annuity commenced, the whole sum he had actually paid should be returned, without interest, to himself, or his representatives. The reason of the small use that has been made of this act, and the admirable substitute proposed for it by the bill introduced (but alas! not passed) last session, have been so clearly explained in a paper, which we cannot be mistaken in attributing to Mr. Poulett Scrope, that we shall give them in his own words:—

“ That Act, however, so far as regards deferred annuities, has been very nearly inoperative. Only a few hundred persons, have, in the course of the seventeen years since its enactment, purchased a deferred annuity; and the entire amount of such annuities granted, appears from a recent return to fall within 9000*l.*

“ The cause of this failure was the insertion in the Act of a clause entitling the purchaser of a deferred annuity to reclaim

* A monthly payment of 12*s.* beginning at *twenty-one* years of age, will secure 30*l.* a year at the age of *fifty-five*, the money to be returned in case of death before that age.

his money (but without interest) at any time, on the plea of inability to keep up the periodical payments agreed upon, and for his executors to do the same if he died before the annuity commenced. It was represented to Lord Althorp that these conditions were indispensable to induce any parties to purchase deferred annuities. They had the precisely opposite effect, of preventing any, or scarcely any purchases. And this by making it the act of a fool to do so.

“For these conditions rendered it necessary of course that the tables should be calculated on the principle of keeping every person’s account separate from the rest. And the *deferred* annuity he was allowed to purchase, was therefore absolutely less in amount than the *immediate* annuity he might at the same age purchase with the same money if left to accumulate at compound interest in the savings’ bank, with the disadvantage of his being obliged in the first case to fix beforehand the age at which it should commence, instead of buying it when he might want it, as he could do in the latter mode.

“Moreover, the principle of payment by instalments, or periodical payments, permitted by the Act of 1833, is essentially a vicious one. The incomes or earnings of the industrious classes are generally precarious. Sickness, accident, local or temporary depressions of trade, and suspension of employment consequent on this or other causes, must very frequently make it next to impossible to keep up regularly a series of periodical payments through a long succession of years. If the money paid is *not* returnable when the engagement is dissolved under such circumstances, the engagement itself has operated as a mere trap to entice the sanguine and unwary into a contract in which they are very likely to sustain a cruel loss. If the money is made returnable, the benefit bargained for is, as has been shown already, necessarily inferior to what may be obtained by its deposit in the savings’ bank, and the ultimate purchase of an *immediate* annuity.

“These considerations appear to have influenced the Chancellor of the Exchequer in framing the clauses of the Savings’ Bank Bill now (1850) before the House of Commons, which extend the provisions of the existing Annuities Act, without, however, repealing any portion of that statute, which will still be available for all parties who choose to make use of it.

“It is proposed, subject to the same limitations as to amount, regulation, and management as in the existing Act, to allow parties to contract with the Commissioners of the National Debt, through the savings’ banks or parochial societies, for deferred annuities, to commence at any age, and to be calculated on the same principle of mutual assurance as is adopted by the benefit societies. Consequently, as in those societies, no money will be returned; and the superior benefit derivable from this principle may be seen by comparing the amount of annuity purchasable under the two systems. For instance, an annuity of ten pounds per annum, to commence at the age of 65, may be purchased at once by a person of the age of 20, on the proposed plan, for the small sum of 7*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*; while under the Act of 1833, it would cost 16*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.* To a purchaser of the age of 30 the difference will be as between 11*l.* 16*s.* 10*d.* and 31*l.* 14*s.* 3*d.*

“All purchases will be required to be completed at once by single payment, so as to avoid the trap of an agreement for periodical payments. But, in order to bring this mode of purchase within reach of the poorest classes, the amount of annuity purchasable at one time, is reduced from four pounds, the limit of the old Act, down to one pound; and, for the sake of simplifying the accounts and transactions, no fractional annuities, other than *even sums in pounds*, will be granted—so that the half-yearly payments will always be in sums of ten shillings or its multiple, and the accounts may be kept in decimals.

“To show by example the working of this plan, a person of the age of 25 may purchase an annuity of one pound per annum, to commence at the age of 65, for the moderate sum of 18*s.* 5*d.*, which we must suppose he may accumulate without difficulty, by depositing his small weekly savings either in the savings’ bank, or in the hands of a friend, or his employer, or the parochial society. At the end of a few months, or in the next year, he will probably be able to add another pound to his annuity at a very slight increase of payment, and so on, till he has secured the full annuity he may desire—the *maximum* being 30*l.*, or about 12*s.* a week, an income not very magnificent, but enough to secure independence, and tolerable comfort in old age.”

We cannot sufficiently express our regret that a bill containing such admirable and much needed provisions should have been allowed to drop, whatever have been the amount or kind of opposition it had to encounter—opposition which we must again characterise as discreditable in a more than ordinary degree.

Another mode of investment which has lately become a great favourite both with the middle and working classes, is afforded by what are termed Benefit Building Societies. The first which is known to have been established dates from 1815, and was founded at Kirkcudbright, under the auspices of a benevolent nobleman, the Earl of Selkirk. The example was followed soon afterwards in various quarters of the North of England, especially in Lancashire. After 1830, these Societies increased so rapidly as to attract the attention of the legislature; and in 1836 a special act (6 & 7 Will. 4. cap. 32.) was passed for their guidance and protection, which gave them some of the privileges, and subjected them to some of the rules, which had previously been extended to Friendly Societies. Up to September, 1850, more than 2000 of them had been duly registered under the provisions of this act in the United Kingdom,—of which, in England alone, 169 were added in the first nine months of that year. Many of these Societies appear to have been dissolved, or to have expired with the efflux of time; but it appears from Mr. Scratchley's work, that "about 1200 are still in existence, the total income of which is calculated at not less than 2,400,000*l.* a year. In fact, there are two or three whose annual incomes are between 50,000*l.* and 60,000*l.* each."

Some of these Societies are temporary and some permanent. Some are confined to a specified number of members, who associate at the outset for a special and limited purpose, and the association expires by a

natural process as soon as this purpose is accomplished. Others continue adding to their numbers indefinitely, and offer a permanent investment to all who join them. In the former case, a certain number of individuals who are desirous of building for themselves, or becoming possessors of the houses they dwell in, form themselves into a Society, subscribe certain specified weekly or monthly sums, which are applied, in the first instance, to the purchase of land on which the dwellings are to be erected, and then, as fast as they accumulate in sufficient amounts to erect a house, are allotted to each member in turn (the individuals who take precedence being decided by arrangement or by lot), till all are provided for, and the concern is closed. Of course, as each several assignment is made, a security is taken upon the house of the fortunate individual, to ensure the continuance of his periodical payments till all the members are similarly circumstanced. By this arrangement, the subscription of very moderate sums (say 5s. or 10s. a month) will enable any one, in the course of a few years, to become owner as well as occupier of a very comfortable dwelling; and, if he wishes, a possessor of the elective franchise.

The permanent and more numerous Societies are slightly different in their machinery:—

“A benefit building society,” says Mr. Scratchley, “when properly constituted, is a species of joint stock association, the members of which subscribe periodically, and in proportion to the number of shares they hold, different sums into one common fund, which thus becomes large enough to be advantageously employed by being lent out at interest to such of the members as desire advances; and the interest, as soon as it is received, making fresh capital, is lent out again and again, so as to be continually reproductive. Large sums may be raised in this manner; *e.g.* if 1000 shares were subscribed for at 10s. a month per share, the amount in one year would be 6000*l.*, which month by month as received, might be advanced to any members who

might wish to become borrowers. The payments of **BORROWERS** are so calculated as to enable them to repay, by equal monthly instalments, within a specified period, the principal of the sum borrowed, and whatever interest may be due upon it throughout the duration of the loan. The other members who have not borrowed, and who are generally termed **INVESTERS**, receive at the end of a given number of years, a large sum, which is equivalent to the amount of their subscriptions, with compound interest accumulated upon them.

“The idea of a society upon this principle, correctly formed, and afterwards properly managed, is of the most admirable kind. For, on the one hand, it holds out inducements to industrious individuals to put by periodically from their incomes small or large sums, which are invested for them by the society, and at the end of a certain time are repaid to them in the shape of a large accumulation, without their having themselves the trouble of seeking suitable investments; while, on the other hand, the money subscribed being advanced to some of the members, enables them to purchase houses or similar property, and to repay the loan by small periodical instalments, extended over a number of years. . . . The annual repayments required by the society upon a loan, do not much exceed the *rent* of such a house as could be purchased with the sum borrowed; so that a man living ten or fourteen years in a house, instead of paying rent to his landlord, and thus losing so much money for ever, pays it with a small addition to a building society for a limited number of years, at the expiration of which the property becomes entirely his own,—the money advanced being in the meantime secured by a suitable mortgage.”

It is obvious that the desirableness of these Societies as a mode of investment for the humbler classes, must depend entirely upon the soundness of the principles on which they are based, and the strictness with which these principles are adhered to in the management. Much money has, no doubt, been lost and spirited away in these undertakings, and none should be trusted by the poor that are not duly certified and registered; but when this precaution is observed, we

believe they deserve the encouragement and favour they have received. Mr. Scratchley's work is a careful exposition of the rules which should guide their constitution and management, drawn up by a competent and experienced man.

Investments in land have hitherto been almost entirely out of the reach of the humbler classes in this country. The enormous difficulty and expense thrown in the way of the acquisition of small properties by the uncertainty of titles, the complexity of the law, and (till recently) the heavy stamp duty, have done much to quench and crush that desire for the possession of land, so natural to all men, so flattering both to pride and to gentler and worthier feelings, and so stimulated with us by the political privileges attached by our ancient constitution to freehold property. Still the sentiment has to a great extent survived, notwithstanding the circumstances which have long made the gratification of it almost an impossibility; and a conviction is gradually growing up among all classes, that this impossibility involves an injustice, and cannot much longer be either defended or retained. For ourselves,—though sharing the doubts expressed by some witnesses examined before Mr. Slaney's Committee, as to whether the purchase of land will generally prove a profitable mode of investment for the savings of the poor; though cognisant of the disappointment and misery which such investments, under Mr. Feargus O'Connor's auspices, have brought upon hundreds of the working classes; though differing from many philanthropists, and from some economists, as to the moral and political consequences of the extensive possession of small freeholds by the peasantry; though thinking that the experience of France and other continental nations clearly shows, that, where encouraged or en-

forced by law, they are far from being as favourable as they are generally represented to be, either to masterly cultivation, to social well-being, to political tranquillity, to progressive development, or to high civilisation,—yet we cannot but feel that, in a country like ours, where equal rights and equal freedom lie at the basis of our polity, and where the enjoyment of the franchise is expressly attached to the possession of land—so emphatically so, that even a forty-shilling freehold entitles its owner to the suffrage—artificial and indirect impediments to the acquisition of that which the constitution points out as the special means of obtaining a vote, can be defended on no tenable plea, and must always be felt to be irritating and inequitable.

We are surprised that this consideration has not had more weight with Conservatives of all sections—those who are Conservative from great possessions, and those who are Conservative from political predilections. In these days of search and question, when every ancient claim is investigated with the keen eye of hostility or envy; when every time-honoured privilege is sharply disputed or dogmatically denied; when every long-descended right is called upon to prove its justice in courts of inquiry, where, if it finds a fair field, it certainly can look for no favour; when prescription is no longer admitted as a valid plea for claims which can be defended on no other ground,—it is good policy, to say the least, on the part of those individuals or classes who have anything valuable to conserve, to make their position as impregnable and unobnoxious as they can. At a time too, when the unlimited right of property in land is questioned, not by envious and needy *prolétaires*, but by profound thinkers and disinterested critics, and when the very principle on which that right is based finds many to deny it, and many thousands to applaud and echo the denial,—it seems specially incumbent on

all possessors of landed property to render that exclusive possession as little invidious as possible, to remove from it all that bears the semblance of injustice, and to be prompt and eager to remedy every collateral consequence, not essential to its safety, which presses on the mass of the community. Generally speaking, the defence of Conservative policy is rendered difficult, not by its inherent injustice or native indefensibility, but because it is surrounded by a multitude of vulnerable, objectionable, and provoking outworks ; because its advocates are perversely fond of taking up untenable positions, and of regarding as part of it, and bound up in its existence, diseased and unnatural excrescences, which are the sources of its greatest weakness, and are its worst internal foes. It is the clear and paramount interest of all classes to abandon at once every untenable position ; and, instead of battling tenaciously for every rotten bastion and venerable buttress, to retire into their impregnable citadel, and to resign, promptly and with a good grace, every point which is in any way oppressive or unjust ; thus proclaiming these points to be essentially unconnected with those rights and privileges which they still hold to be sacred and inalienable.

Now there are several consequences connected with the tenure of land in this country, which are looked upon with an evil eye by the unpropertied classes of the community ; which are, in themselves, utterly unjust and inadmissible ; and which have been mainly instrumental in bringing landed proprietors into odium, and the right of landed property into question. Some of these are the relics of feudal times ; some have grown up unconsciously during the lapse of centuries ; some have been intentionally enacted by landowners, in days when they had greater power than at present of working their own selfish will. Such is the whole

system of legal titles, which surround the sale and purchase of land with so many difficulties and such enormous cost, as to render it impracticable to the poor man, and almost to forbid the acquisition of small freeholds. Such is the law of distraint—giving to landlords an unfair, and (as is now believed) a suicidal advantage over other creditors. Such is the exemption of landed property from legacy duty. Such was, till a few years ago, the provision by which landed property was secure from the claims of simple contract creditors. Of all these, probably the difficulties which have gathered round the transfer of land and its purchase in small quantities have been particularly odious and practically oppressive. They are peculiar to this country. They arise from the old feudal notion, that land differs from other sorts of property, is more sacred than any other, and must be dealt with on different principles. A title is required in the case of land, which is needed in no other case. Before land can be safely purchased, this title must be traced for at least sixty years; every claim and incumbrance that has ever existed upon it must be carefully sifted; and any mistake or omission in these tedious and costly processes may vitiate the title of the purchaser, and deprive him of his honestly acquired possession. But while all these heavy requisitions have been made, the means of fulfilling them at a reasonable cost of trouble and money have been steadily withheld. A general office (or offices in all the counties) for the registration of title-deeds, mortgages, and sales, which has been so long demanded by the country, has hitherto been obstinately refused; and the difficulty of obtaining a cheap and certain title to an estate you might wish to purchase, has amounted to an impossibility. Lord Campbell's Registration Bill, introduced last session, will in part remedy this deplorable deficiency—a de-

ficiency peculiar to England. England is (we believe we are correct in stating) the only civilised country in which such a registration does not exist, and has not long existed. Throughout almost the whole of Europe, land can be purchased, and a valid and absolute title obtained without difficulty at a very moderate cost, because a *bureau des hypothèques* exists, in which the title to every estate, and the incumbrances upon it, are officially recorded; and a reference to this office at once enables any individual, who wishes to become a purchaser (or a mortgagee), to complete the transaction with entire and final security.

Now it may or may not be desirable that land should be extensively sold in small portions; land may or may not offer a profitable and generally beneficial investment for the savings of the working classes; it is very possible that they may burn their fingers in the attempt to become peasant proprietors; may pay dearly for their whistle, and learn wisdom by painful experience alone; but it seems abundantly clear that the legislature cannot with justice, virtually and by a side wind, deny to the poor a privilege which it accords to the rich—viz. that of choosing in what way they shall employ their money, and of making a foolish employment of it if they will; nor can it be expected that the humbler section of the community will ever be reconciled to, or persuaded of the justice of, a law which debars them from a favourite mode of investment, on the plea of paternal watchfulness and benevolence, but to which alleged and suspicious motive they will give a very different interpretation.

The case of the franchise makes the collateral impediments now existing in the acquisition of small landed properties peculiarly unwise and indefensible. There is, on the part of a certain portion of the people, a demand for an extension of electoral rights. To this

demand landowners generally, and Conservative landowners in particular, are opposed; and it is the more indispensable that they should put themselves in a position to oppose it fairly. The franchise, they say, is low enough. The constitution gives to every man who possesses or can procure a freehold of the yearly value of forty shillings, a county vote of equal weight with that of the landlord whose territorial income is a hundred thousand pounds. Lower than this, it is contended, you cannot go, unless you wish to abolish a property qualification altogether. Every man possessed of the industry, steadiness, and intelligence, which alone can guarantee his fitness for the exercise of the franchise, can surely amass, by these qualities, the 50*l.* or 60*l.* requisite for its acquirement. The argument is good enough in theory, and would carry almost irresistible weight with it, if the enormous cost attending our abominable system of landed property and conveyance in the case of small estates, did not act as a direct bar, and often as an absolute preventative, to the poor man who wishes to obtain the elective franchise by purchasing a forty-shilling freehold. These artificial difficulties vitiate the plea, and neutralise the whole argument. It is a mockery to tell the poor man that the county franchise is within his reach, and is guarded by as low a qualification as possible, when, in order to obtain legal and secure possession of this franchise, he must pay away, independent of the purchase money*,

* The usual stamp law and expenses (since the large reduction of the stamp duties in the session of 1850) attending the purchase, by poor men, of small plots of land up to 100*l.* in value, do not exceed from 5*l.* to 15*l.*, because in these cases there is never any minute investigation of title. If the purchaser was a man to whom security was everything and money nothing, and who therefore required a thorough examination of title, the expense would vary with the complexity of the title, and might reach from five to ten times the above-named sum. The insecurity, perhaps even more than the

a sum equal to three, four, or five times its annual value. He must pay for his privilege once to the vendor, and a second time to the lawyer and the Stamp Office. The constitution enacts that he shall have a vote if he can purchase a freehold of a certain annual value. The conveyancer and the government step in, and, between them, virtually nullify the constitutional enactment. The theory of the county franchise is defensible enough; but this monstrous abuse in its practical working embarrasses and silences all its honest advocates. Therefore, we think that such an entire reform in this matter as shall render the purchase of small properties safe, cheap, and feasible, is absolutely essential in order to place the opponents of organic changes in a just or tenable position. We are fully aware that the difficulties to be got over are most serious,—that the work is a great, and must probably be a slow one; but it is one thing to recognise an obstacle, and another to sit down under an assumed impossibility; it is one thing to preach patience during a gradual and tedious cure, and another to preach it under a permanent and hopeless malady.

Neither have we any fear lest the easy acquirability of small landed freeholds should lead in this country to the creation of a body of peasant proprietors to an

cost, is the real cause of the inexpediency of land as an investment for the savings of the poor man. It is at any time possible that he may be deprived of his little property by some claimant of whom neither he nor his solicitor has ever heard, especially if the abstract of title has been dispensed with. Even the “sixty years’ title” affords only a likelihood of safety. One or two of the most eminent conveyancers recently accepted a title of the usual length, which turned out to be perfectly worthless, owing to the circumstance of a tenant for life having lived *ninety* years; at whose death the reversioner would come in quite unaffected by the circumstance of the property having been dealt with as a fee for the sixty or seventy years preceding.

inconvenient or perilous extent. Hitherto, we know, the tendency has rather been towards the swallowing up of such small properties as formerly abounded. The race of yeomen—"statesmen" as they are termed in Westmoreland and Cumberland—has long been in process of gradual absorption. The *excess* of landed subdivision, and its many evil consequences, have appeared in countries, not where all natural causes and motives are left free to operate, but where a special, forced, and almost irresistible influence has been brought to bear upon the population by directing and restraining laws. It is one thing to facilitate, and another to command;—and to render small properties possible is not to enact their prevalence.

There is another point in reference to this matter which landlords would do well to consider:—How many years' purchase would be added to the value of their estates by such a system of registration as should render the sale of land secure, simple, and inexpensive?—How many more years' purchase would be added by the greater number of customers who would come forward were the sale of small lots rendered feasible and easy?—We all know how immensely the marketable value of any article is affected by facilities of transfer, and by the competition of a larger class of purchasers; but to what extent these causes might operate in raising the price of land in England we have as yet no means of calculating:—we can only guess at it from an observation of their effects in France and in the Rhenish provinces. In Ireland, the additional value conferred upon the properties sold under the Encumbered Estates' Act, by the mere fact of a cheap parliamentary title, is, we believe, reckoned to do more than counterbalance the disadvantages of a forced sale.

As usual, evil breeds evil. Artificial stratagems are resorted to to counteract artificial obstacles. The

principle of association is brought in to defeat and circumvent legal impediments. "Freehold Land Societies" have been extensively formed for the avowed object of extending the elective franchise to those whom the constitution contemplates as its possessors, but whom the collateral impediments we have spoken of debar from its acquisition. They scarcely can be said to offer a channel for *investments*, properly so called; since the investments they offer might be suspected of having been sought less for the sake of the interest they may yield, than for that of the political influence they promise. At least, so we should have thought from appearances and from the nature of the principal appeals made in their favour. On the other hand, we are assured by parties and others acquainted with the details, that mercantile motives have had greater influence than political with the existing members.

"Their object is simple enough, and easily understood. Proceeding on the principle that land, when sold in the gross, fetches a lower price per acre than when sold in small portions, particularly in the vicinity of large towns, these societies purchase, with money obtained from external sources, considerable estates, and divide the same among members in allotments sufficiently large to constitute 40s. freeholds. These freeholds may thus be allotted at a price which any skilled artisan in steady employment may easily accumulate in the course of five or six years, by laying aside 1s. 6d. a week out of his wages for that purpose. . . . The scheme was first tried in Birmingham, in a society formed by Mr. J. Taylor of that town. The workmen there had heard of the efforts of the Anti-Corn-Law-League, to carry South Lancashire by registering as many of their members as could be persuaded to purchase 40s. freeholds. The average price of such freeholds was separately 70*l.*; and it occurred to them that by combining the principles of accumulating a considerable fund through moderate weekly subscriptions, with that of buying land at a wholesale cost, and by

dividing it in allotments to subscribers at the same price, 40s. freeholds might be brought within the reach of workmen, or at least of the sober and steady members of the skilled artisan class. Persuading others to join them, and securing the countenance and co-operation of several members of parliament, the first Freehold Land Society was founded in Birmingham in 1847."—*Scratchley*, p. 158.

It is obvious that by this system of procedure another great economy is effected, besides that of the difference between the wholesale and the retail price of land. One original investigation of title—the costly part of conveyancing—will suffice for all the subsequent subdivisions of the estate. Under the combined influence of these causes, the freeholders in this Society appear to have obtained their lots at about 20*l.* each. This success was so remarkable and unexpected that similar societies rapidly sprung up in every part of the country—in Derby, Coventry, London, Leicester, Wolverhampton, Worcester, Leeds, Halifax, Gloucester, and many other places. It was moreover formally decided, in the highest law courts, that votes thus acquired were perfectly good; that the conveyance of land for a *bonâ fide* consideration was valid, even though the avowed object of the vendor is to extend, and that of the purchasers to acquire, the right of voting; and that the endeavour thus to multiply the possessors of the county franchise was entirely consonant to law, morality, and sound policy. Under this encouragement these associations multiplied so fast, that at the end of 1849, the total number of members, in the aggregate, amounted to 14,281, and the shares to 20,475. A later return in October, 1850, states that there were then eighty Societies in operation, with numerous branches; and that 170,000*l.* had been contributed upon 30,000 shares of the ultimate value of nearly one million sterling. In November, 1851, the number of societies was up-

wards of 100 ; the number of members, 45,000 ; the shares subscribed for 65,000 ; the amount actually paid up 400,000*l.* ; and the total sum subscribed for, upwards of 2,000,000*l.*

Notwithstanding this rapid popularity, however, — notwithstanding also the high authorities which have pronounced in their behalf, — we cannot look upon these associations with unmixed favour ; and we shall be surprised if any long time elapses without well-grounded disappointment and discontent arising among their members. However desirable it may be for a peasant or artisan to be possessor of the garden which he cultivates, and the house he dwells in — however clear and great the gain to him in this case, — it is by no means equally certain that he can derive any adequate pecuniary advantage from the possession of a plot of land which is too far from his daily work for him either to erect a dwelling on it, or to cultivate it as an allotment, and which from its diminutive size he will find it very difficult to let to a tenant for any sufficient remuneration. In many cases a barren vote will be his only reward for 50*l.* of savings ; and however he may value this in times of excitement, it will, in three elections out of four, be of little real interest or moment to him. Moreover, elections do not come very often : contested elections in counties are still rarer. So that it will only be perhaps once in twenty years that he will really congratulate himself on his position as a county voter. Then, it must be very seldom, and only under most peculiar and rarely-recurring combinations, that a 40*s.* freehold can be purchased (as it was said to be at Birmingham) for 20*l.* This would be to suppose that land can often yield 10 per cent. In the great majority of cases 50*l.* (or an investment at 4 per cent.) will be nearer the mark. If, therefore, the aspirant has been led into the scheme from a false estimate, and finds himself

called upon to pay two or three times as much as he had calculated on, disappointment and reproach must ensue.

“ Again, when the land is purchased it will be utterly useless in a pecuniary sense to the owner, unless four or five can join together to let their fractions of territory to one tenant; or unless the purchaser contemplates building thereon for his own purposes. A mechanic in a manufacturing town cannot himself make any use of his land; he is ignorant of its management, and can only make a profit from his purchase by letting it to others [at a considerable legal cost]; and even then the expense of employing an agent, with the uncertainty of collecting his small rent regularly, would diminish the advantage of his purchase. Hence it appears probable that much discontent will shortly arise among the poorer members of these societies, who have entered under the impression that in addition to the influence acquired by the possession of a county vote, they would be making a highly lucrative profit from their savings. The comparatively rich member, who can take up several shares, will reap benefit, not only from the greater certainty of being able to turn his land to account, but also from the increase in the general profits of the association, that must accrue through the forfeited shares of those members whose means of existence are too limited or precarious to enable them to be regular in their payments.”—*Scratchley*, p. 168.

There are, however, other Societies of which the primary aim has been the acquisition of land simply as a profitable investment for the savings of the poor. It is pleaded, and with a great show of justice, that parties naturally desire to invest in matters of which they have some cognisance; that the various modes resorted to by the artisan of towns for disposing of his savings have no meaning or attraction for the agricultural peasant; that to him land is the great object of desire, and the cultivation of it his most natural, and probably most profitable occupation; that he will lay by with this view when no other motive would be strong enough to tempt him to frugality; and that means should be given him

for obtaining the object of his wishes. Considerations of this kind secured a favourable hearing even for the notorious Land Schemes of Mr. Feargus O'Connor; while the eagerness with which shares in his company were sought for, and the absurd premiums given in some cases to the allottees for the possession of their plots, showed how widely spread among the lower classes is the desire of partaking in the actual possession of the soil. It is remarkable, however, that nearly all the shareholders and allottees were town-bred tradesmen — shoemakers, tailors, carpenters, shopkeepers, &c. — scarcely ever agricultural labourers.

Into the details of this remarkable scheme our limits will not allow us to enter. Its merits, both as to conduct and conception, were fully examined in 1848 by a Committee of the House of Commons, whose six voluminous Reports, now lying before us, we have conscientiously endeavoured to digest; and we are bound to say, that so much daring illegality — so much sanguine misrepresentation — so much wild calculation — so much absurdly golden expectation, combined with unquestionable *bonâ fides*, were probably never before crowded into a single project. Every estimate seemed to be made on the supposition of a perpetual miraculous interposition — an untiring special Providence watching over the association. Every acre was to yield on an *average* such crops as no acre ever did yield except under the rarest combination of favouring climate, consummate skill, and unlimited manure — and then only occasionally. Every cow was to live for ever, was to give more milk than any save the most exceptional kine ever gave before, and was never to be dry. Every pig was to be a prize ox — every goose to be a swan. The allottees were to pay a full rent, and yet to thrive as no men in this island, farming their own unincumbered property, ever yet thrived. And to crown the whole, the net residue

at the end of the year, after deducting rent, taxes, maintenance of family, and necessary outlay, was to be, on an allotment of three acres, 44*l.*, or *two hundred per cent.*, on the floating capital employed ! The company was to raise a capital of 150,000*l.*, on 100,000 shares of 30*s.* each ; and it appears that 70,000 individuals took shares, and that 90,000*l.* was actually paid. With this money, estates were bought, divided into lots of two, three, and four acres respectively, and assigned by lot, as far as they would go, among the shareholders who had completed their payments. The allottees were then put in possession of their lots, established in a good cottage, worth 100*l.*, supplied with capital at the rate of 7*l.* 10*s.* per acre, charged a rent equal to 4*l.* per cent. on the sums expended (which amounted on the three acre allotments, to between 13*l.* and 14*l.*), and then expected to thrive and save at the rate of 30*l.* or 40*l.* per annum. Five estates were thus purchased and parcelled out more or less completely ;— but alas ! the capital was insufficient to stock them properly ; the labour was insufficient to cultivate them properly ; skill and knowledge were alike wanting ; the crops were scantier and poorer than those on the neighbouring farms ; the rents remained unpaid ; the fortunate allottees retired in disgust, or sold their allotments to more sanguine or richer men, to such an extent that at the end of the first twelve months, 25 per cent. of the original possessors had vacated their holdings.

The failure of this scheme*, to the lamentable extent at least to which its failure is now certain, may no doubt be traced mainly to the originally erroneous and deceptive calculations on which it was founded, and to the fact of nearly all the allottees being parties wholly ignorant of agriculture, and in all respects unfitted to

* It is now being wound up in the Court of Chancery under a special act obtained for that purpose.

meet the hardships or requirements of a rural life. They appear to have met with great kindness and liberal assistance from the farmers near them, who compassionated their delicacy and incapacity ; but they could endure neither the cold of winter, nor the heat of summer, and had frequently to employ hired labour for the hard work they were unable to perform for themselves. Had the allotments been taken by experienced agricultural peasants, the results might in some respects have been very different. But the radical objection would still have remained—that under none but the most favourable and the rarest circumstances could such small properties as two, three, or four acres, support a family in comfort without the expenditure of an amount of capital and labour which is never commanded by the purchasers of such. Without entering into detailed calculations, and fully admitting the enormous produce that may in some cases be obtained off a given acreage, by a *proportionate* expenditure of manure and toil—the dilemma in which such small holders are placed we believe may be stated thus :—If the holdings are small enough to be *fully* tilled and manured by the labour and capital of one man and his wife and children, the produce is inadequate to their support :—if they are large enough for the adequate maintenance of a family, they require hired labour and borrowed capital, which, together, sweep away profit. In all the instances we have heard of in this country of very large returns from plots of two or three acres, we have found that the result has been due to the *unlimited* application of capital and labour. It would not be difficult to show why the allottees in Mr. O'Connor's Land Company *could* not have succeeded with the amount of land assigned to them, the amount of capital advanced to them, and the amount of rent demanded from them ; but our space

prevents our entering into the proof: we can only give the conclusion arrived at by the Commissioner who investigated the matter at great length on behalf of the Poor Law Board, and whose view is confirmed by that of others who visited and examined into the position of the different tenants. "I think it may be fairly concluded that all those who occupy the Land Company's allotments, with nothing more than the produce of their allotment to depend upon, will fail to obtain a living."*

But while the result of Mr. O'Connor's scheme, and of many similar experiments, would seem to indicate that the possession of any small allotment of land—say under six or eight acres—can rarely, in this country, enable the proprietor either to rise in life or to bring up a family in decency and comfort, unless he possesses some independent capital, or can combine his ownership with some other occupation; and is, therefore, an undesirable channel into which to divert the accumulations of frugality and forethought—the case may probably be very different when land is dealt with in larger divisions. It seems possible enough that properties of 25 or 30 acres may be cultivated with success by those who bring to the task a reasonable amount of capital and such zeal and devotion as ownership commonly brings with it. Accordingly, a scheme was proposed some years ago by Mr. William Bridges, and is now beginning to attract some degree of attention, by which parties of moderate means might be enabled to become purchasers and *bonâ fide* proprietors of estates of various sizes, in Ireland or elsewhere, by a happy union of the principle of life assurance with that of association. Assuming the desirability (either as a general good, or to meet a special social emergency,) of creating or facilitating the creation of a class of inde-

* Evidence before Select Committee, 3367.

pendent yeomen, we confess we have never met with a plan which appears so simple, so promising, and, in every point of view, so unobjectionable.

“The nature of a freehold life assurance company,” says Mr. Scratchley (p. 200.), “may be easily and concisely explained. Suitable tracts of country being purchased from the existing proprietors, would, unless already in the desired state, be drained, fenced, and otherwise adapted for immediate profitable cultivation at the expense of the company, and, so improved, would be divided into allotments of the proper size [say from 30 to 100 acres], and furnished with the requisite buildings. These allotments would then be disposed of, by conveying the fee simple thereof to chosen persons (who could at once enter upon and profitably cultivate the same) subject to a terminable rent charge, a part of which would consist of the interest of the capital expended, and would be, in point of fact, a rent like that which in the usual relation of landlord and tenant, is paid for the hire of land; while the remainder would consist of premiums which would be paid by the allottees, on the ordinary principles of life assurance, in order to secure for each the payment at his death of *a sum equal to the estimated value of his particular allotment*. On his death, the sum assured would not be paid to his devisees or representatives; but in lieu thereof they become the absolute possessors of an unincumbered freehold estate.”

In other words, the purchaser is tenant during his life, and becomes absolute possessor on his death; or, to speak more accurately, he at once enters on the full and entire ownership of the estate on the sole conditions of insuring his life for a fixed sum, and paying a small rent till his death. We will suppose him to purchase 30 acres, at the price of 33*l.* an acre, including all buildings &c., needful for the due cultivation of the land—a rate at which vast quantities of good land may be purchased in different parts of the kingdom. The value of his allotment would thus be 1000*l.* If he enter upon it at the age of thirty, his annual payment will be as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
<i>Rent</i> , (or interest at 4 per cent. on the fee value 1000 <i>l.</i>) - - - - -	40	0	0
<i>Life Insurance</i> 2 <i>l.</i> 5 <i>s.</i> per cent. - -	22	10	0
	62	10	0

In consideration, therefore, of paying for life, 62*l.* 10*s.* a year, or 40*l.* to the company, as landlord, and 22*l.* 10*s.* to the company as an insurance office (which latter sum he may compound for by an equivalent payment down), he at once obtains possession, in absolute ownership, of an estate worth 1000*l.*, and on his death it passes to his heir, free from any payment or incumbrance whatever; so that, from the moment of his entrance, he can regard it with all the sentiments and affections of ownership, and can lay out money upon it in full security that the benefit will not be reaped by others—unless, indeed, he should fail in paying the $2\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. yearly premium.

It has not escaped the attention of reflecting men, that a certain collateral consequence follows on the spread of saving habits among the poor, which should not be overlooked. In proportion as the custom of frugality and accumulation prevails through the community, will be the tendency of the rate of interest to decline. The greater the amount of savings seeking profitable investment, the greater will be the difficulty of finding such investments. If it be employed in benefit societies and sick clubs, the advantages offered by such societies will tend to diminish. If invested in Government securities, those securities will rise. If laid out in the purchase of land, the price of land—already high—will be inordinately and injuriously enhanced. Moved partly by these considerations, and by others of

more immediate force and more easy comprehension, many of the working classes and their friends have recently been endeavouring to find some more lucrative employment for their savings, than investments yielding simple interest can continue to offer. They wish to make their small capitals *productive* as well as profitable. They do not see why, in place of lending their money to others for employment, they should not themselves employ it in some branch of trade or industry with which they are familiar. It is true that a greater risk will probably be incurred in the latter case than in the former; but the additional profit to be realised is tempting, and the independence of the position offered is flattering and attractive. They do not see why they should not combine their several accumulations, and employ them in a business which they understand. Being capitalists as well as labourers, in virtue of their savings, they see no reason why they should not become their own employers; and thus unite the remunerations, as well as the functions, of the two classes.

From motives and reflections of this sort—stimulated in special cases by the wish to emancipate themselves from special grievances—have sprung those “Working Men’s Associations,” of which we have heard so much of late; which are so numerous in France, and which now, aided by the zeal of certain benevolent theorists, are spreading in this country. Their object is perfectly legitimate; their constitutions are, generally speaking, based on fair and sound principles; the experiment they are trying is one which well deserves to be worked out; the zeal with which they have been taken up by the operative classes, is highly honourable to them; those of them whose rules have been drawn up by competent parties, infringe, so far as we are aware, no axiom of social philosophy, or of that branch of it which belongs

to political economy ; and we think that they are fairly entitled to the recognition and protection of the law.

Whether they are likely to prosper, except in isolated instances, and under peculiar circumstances, is a wholly different, and, for our present purpose, an irrelevant question. Whether the combination of functions which civilisation has hitherto tended to divide, by a retrograde or a forward step ; whether the ruling and controlling hand—so essential to the prosperity of all undertakings—can be made strong enough in such republican associations, for prompt and decisive action ; whether an elected manager will be able to perform the functions which must be delegated to him, with the same efficient, untiring, uniform probity and zeal which mark the proceedings and ensure the success of the individual merchant, manufacturer, or tradesman ; whether the necessary harmony is likely to reign where the power to enforce subordination emanates from the mere will of a majority which will fluctuate under the influences of intrigue, caprice, or agitation ; whether the people can find among themselves the intelligence and education necessary to take a comprehensive view of their interest, and of all considerations which may bear upon it, or can purchase that intelligence at a cheaper rate than that at which the usual arrangements of society now supply it to them ; all these are questions wholly beside and beyond the mark. We may be of opinion—perhaps we are—that disappointment will be the result of these undertakings ; we may deem that experience will show their promoters that, under the arrangements which habitually prevail, the capitalist has not, as they imagine, so very undue a share of the profits of their joint exertions, and that they may find it impossible *perfectly* to fill his place, and to exercise his peculiar functions ; we may even think that these associations contain within them seeds of almost certain

failure, inasmuch as they presume upon the general prevalence of virtues which, unhappily, are still rare, and on the subjugation of frailties and passions which, alas! are still dominant and rampant. But these are not inquiries into which the legislature is called upon to enter. The legislature is not bound, nor is it entitled, to forbid Englishmen to enter into this or that industrial undertaking, because in its wisdom it deems it unlikely to be profitable. It does not lie within its duty even to inquire into this point. In the case of railway and similar great undertakings, the case is wholly different: there parliament is asked to accord to certain companies extraordinary privileges, one of which is that of limited liability, and another, that of taking land and buildings from other parties without their permission, and against their will;—it is, therefore, bound to ascertain what is the probability of success, and whether the gain to the public is likely to be such as should outweigh the violation of private rights. But no such plea can be urged in the case of associations which only ask for the protection of the law in exercising the undoubted privilege of every freeman—that of employing his money in whatever legitimate mode he, in his wisdom or his folly, may deem fit. For the legislature to refuse this protection on the ground that the adventure will probably turn out a disadvantageous one, and that it ought to protect its subjects from the consequences of their own folly, is to arrogate to itself the functions, and, at the same time, to impose upon itself the obligations, of the “paternal governments” of the Continent. All that parliament is called upon to do, is to ascertain that the investment or the undertaking proposes no noxious object, violates no moral law, invades no man’s rights, is based upon no fraudulent representations, and threatens no public mischief. If the scheme can vindicate itself on all these points, then

its promoters are as clearly entitled to the protection of the law, whether their object be the making of dolls' eyes, or the manufacture of cloth, or the construction of steam engines, as if they were great individual capitalists, engaged in a recognised undertaking. The scheme may, it is probable, turn out disastrously ;—but the people will not believe this on the assertion of their superiors ; they will learn contentedly in no school but that of their own experience. The project may have failure written on its face ; but it is the birthright of Britons to play at ducks and drakes with their money ; it is one of the privileges they most value ; one they take care shall not be lost *non utendo* ; one, the curtailment or deprivation of which, they would resent with especial anger. It is as dear and as indefeasible to the poor man, as to the rich : he is entitled in these matters to judge for himself ; and to prevent him from doing so by leaving him without any resource, except the Court of Chancery, against fraudulent associates or inevitable disputes, is to do that by a side wind, which it is beyond the acknowledged province of English legislation to do directly.

We are at issue with Mr. Mill as to the probability of these " Working Associations " commanding any general success ; but we are glad to fortify ourselves by his authority, as to the desirableness of allowing their experiment a fair trial. In his evidence before Mr. Slaney's Committee, he says :—

" Even if it were quite clear that they would not succeed, it would be of the greatest importance that they should be allowed to try the experiment, and that they should have every facility given them, to convince those who were trying the experiment that it was tried fairly. Besides, even if such experiments failed, the attempt to make them succeed would be a very important matter in the way of education to the working classes, both intellectually and morally. . . . The advantages which

the possession of large capital gives, are—not from any intention on the part of the legislature, but arising from causes into which intention does not enter at all—to a great degree a monopoly in the hands of the rich; and it is natural that the poor should desire to obtain those same advantages by association, the only way in which they can do so. This seems to be an extremely legitimate purpose on the part of the working classes, and one that it would be desirable to carry out, if it could be effected.

“You think then that it would be but just and politic to allow them, under reasonable safeguards, to carry out this experiment; so that if they are right they may receive the benefit, and if they are wrong they may be undeceived in their unreasonable expectations?—Certainly; and there would be this great advantage, that supposing those associations embraced only a small part of the working classes, they would have almost the same salutary effect on their minds as if they embraced the whole; because, if a number of those associations were in existence, and they were found to be able to maintain their ground, and to compete well, or tolerably, or under great disadvantages even, with individual capitalists, still the whole of the working classes would see that such disadvantages arose, not from the law, but from the nature of the case, or from the absence of the necessary qualities in them; therefore those who might continue to be receivers of wages in the service of individual capitalists, would then feel that they were doing so not from compulsion, but from choice, and that, taking all the circumstances into consideration, their condition appeared preferable to them as receivers of wages.”

The associations in question are Societies of working men, who, instead of accepting employment under an individual capitalist, combine to carry on their own trade or branch of industry in concert, the needful capital being supplied either by their own savings, or by friendly loans, or by both sources united. They are, in fact, partnerships of labour, as others are partnerships of capital. They may be composed of mixed capitalists and labourers; and may assign profits to the

capitalist, on the one hand, in respect of his capital, and to the labourer, on the other hand, in respect of his labour:—or they may be composed, as they generally are, of labourers only, working either on their own capital, or on money borrowed at a fixed rate of interest, and dividing profits solely in respect of labour. In either case, they are characterised by a division of profits, either total or partial, among the partners, in respect of the labour performed by these for the benefit of the partnership. In London, there are now eight of these associations, composed of tailors, needlewomen, printers, builders, pianoforte makers, shoemakers, and bakers, which are said to be tolerably flourishing. Others have been formed in the provinces; but of their prospects, nothing can yet be affirmed. In France, however, these associations have spread much more rapidly. In Paris, they are now 197 in number; and some of them threaten to engross the greater part of the trade of their respective branches. Of this number, the bakers furnish six, printers four, cooks forty-seven, hairdressers thirty-four, hatters six, shirtmakers five, and shoemakers and tailors four each. In this country, their spread has been greatly impeded, and their existence is continually threatened, by the existing law of partnership, which involves any associations at all numerous in much difficulty and expense, and affords them very imperfect protection. Yet, by the common law, as well as by the civil law, labour is recognised as forming a proper and valid ground of partnership. Thus, Collyer on Partnership, p. 2.: “Partnership, as between the parties themselves, is a voluntary contract between two or more persons for joining together their money, goods, *labour*, and *skill*, or any or all of them, under an understanding that there shall be a communion of profit between them,” &c. &c. As to the civil law, see 3 Just. xxvi.; Dig. xvii. t. ii.

As long as the associations consist of fewer than twenty-six members, they work under the common law; if they exceed this number at starting, or should at any future time increase so as to do so, they come under the Joint Stock Companies Act. In the former case they meet with three difficulties, which together are almost fatal to their legal and safe existence. In the first place they have no means of enforcing rules agreed upon among themselves for their own guidance, even if signed by every member, except by application to the Court of Chancery, which, as we all know, is a mere cruel mockery.* The power of inflicting penalties, or enforcing exclusion against unruly, indolent, or refractory associates, is of course essential to the working of any such association; but in these respects the law affords them no aid. The Rules provide for the appointment of an arbitrator, who shall decide all disputes which arise within the body;—but the law confers no power to enforce his decision. The Rules provide for the dismissal of any associate who shall refuse to submit to the decision of the arbitrator, or disobey any rule, or accept fee or reward from buyer or seller, or absent himself from work without excuse, or commit any criminal offence;—but the dismissal of a partner is impossible in law, and submission to such dismissal is therefore simply optional. Hitherto, in the few cases in which it has been found necessary to enforce it, it has been submitted to; but it is obvious that this could not be counted upon. In the second place, these bodies are without remedy against a peculating or fraudulent associate. The law assumes that the property of the

* There is, indeed, a clause in the County Courts' Act, which enables suits for account in partnership matters to be brought into those courts, when the balance to be recovered is under a certain amount; but the clause is imperfect and inadequate, applies only to a particular case, and has in practice been found almost unworkable.

partnership is the property of each member of it;—and accordingly any individual may march off with goods or money belonging to the body, with perfect impunity, as far as any criminal proceeding is concerned, and with no liability whatever to any civil process, except through a court of equity. Of course no association can long flourish in such an unprotected condition. As a sample of the actual operation of the law in this particular, we may mention that a working Bakers' Association, which never numbered more than five members, has had to suffer from the frauds of three of them in succession; and at last, though carrying on a flourishing trade, has had to be constituted as an ordinary mastership.* It is clear that in the case of these associations, prompt criminal, even more than civil, remedies are required. In this respect there is an obvious difference between partnerships of labour and partnerships of capital: redress may be afforded by the *purse* in the latter case; it must be sought for from the *person* in the former. These will be composed entirely of the humbler classes, who unfortunately supply the great bulk of our criminal population, whose passions are stronger, and whose moral restraint is generally less; many of whom will have little or nothing to lose, and can only be reached through personal suffering or inconvenience. Again, it must be observed that the frauds to which these working associations are mainly exposed,—viz., petty abstractions of money, and above all of goods and materials,—are precisely those against which capitalists' partnerships have, practically, in almost

* In one case, however, criminal proceedings were taken with success by the manager against an embezzling associate. It was held by the Court that the accused was *not* a partner, the association being one in which a subscription was required, and he not having paid any money, nor otherwise fulfilled any of the conditions of membership.

all cases, criminal remedies; inasmuch as the persons who there have the opportunity to commit these frauds are simply servants and not partners. Whereas, in labour partnerships, by their very constitution, those functions which are elsewhere performed by hired servants, are here performed by partners. To confine them therefore to civil remedies, is virtually to deny them justice altogether.—The third difficulty is one which we need only name: they cannot sue or be sued in the name of the firm of the managers.

If they exceed twenty-six members, they come under the operation of the Joint Stock Companies Act, which, having been framed with a view to large undertakings and partnerships of capitalists, is wholly inapplicable to their case. Among other requirements, impossible for them to fulfil, this act requires the deed of settlement to state “the amount of the proposed capital, and of any proposed additional capital, and the means by which it is to be raised; and when the capital shall not be money, or shall not consist entirely of money, the nature of such capital, and the value thereof, shall be stated.” Another clause requires the division of the capital into equal shares, and the specification of the total number of those shares; also the total number held by each subscriber. Now all these regulations are obviously quite beside the mark in the case of working men’s associations, which begin, perhaps, with three members, and a capital of 30*l.*, and gradually rise to fifty members and a capital of 3000*l.*, and which divide profits according to labour performed, not according to shares held. Moreover, the expense incurred and the penalties risked in the case of joint stock companies working under their special act, would be fatal to the formation of labouring associations. The expense of certificates of registration, provisional and final, is 5*l.* each; and for the total cost of registration under the

act, 50*l.* would be a low average. Then a penalty of 20*l.* is incurred by delaying provisional registration; 20*l.* for delaying returns of alterations, &c. in the deed of settlement; 20*l.* for delaying half-yearly returns of transfers of shares, &c. &c.

Now what is asked on behalf of these associations is simply a legal existence, with power to sue and be sued, enter into contracts, buy, sell, &c., and a simple and prompt protection against fraud or violation of rules. These objects might be at once and easily attained by the introduction into the Friendly Societies Act, of which we spoke at the beginning of this paper (and which is so great a favourite with the working classes), of a clause including working associations (when duly certified and registered) among those which are there enumerated in § 2. as entitled to the benefit of the act, or to those sections of it at least (*viz.* §§ 13, 14, 22—30.) which provide for legal existence, prompt decisions, and cheap remedies,—for they do not ask either for exemption from stamp duties, or for precedence in the recovery of debts. All that they demand is in fact that which the theory of English law guarantees to every man, *viz.*—protection in legitimate and honest enterprise, and the easy enforcement of free and fair contracts. A single clause in a single act of parliament would give them this.

Many of the above remarks will apply to Co-operative Stores, which have been established in many places by Societies of working men, with the object of supplying themselves with good and genuine articles at a fair market price, and dividing among themselves any accruing profit, in proportion to their dealings. There seems to be no valid ground assignable why these associations should not be entitled to the protection of the law, and why summary remedies should not be afforded them against those frauds to which they are from their

nature peculiarly exposed. There appears no reason why workmen who choose to combine their earnings in order to compete, in a regular trade, with individual capitalists, should not be enabled to do so legally and with safety. In fact, a clause in the Friendly Societies Act—called “the Frugal Investment Clause”—enables them to do so, *provided they confine their dealings to their own members*: if they sell, even occasionally or by chance, to other customers, they forfeit the protection of the act. This limitation has been found practically to exclude them nearly all. It has been found almost impossible, among a limited number of subscribers, to dispose of all the goods required for the purposes of trade. Thus, the People’s Mill, at Leeds, the largest and most flourishing co-operative body in England, is said to have suddenly discovered itself to be thrown out of the pale of the law, because while all its *flour* is eagerly bought up by subscribers, it has been compelled to seek elsewhere customers for its *bran*. And, practically, the plan set on foot by the co-operative store at Galashiels, has been found to be the most successful one by far—viz., that of selling indiscriminately to subscribers and to the public, but dividing profits among subscribers only, in proportion to their subscription. An alteration of the “Frugal Investment Clause” is, however, required to bring such stores within its scope. The public would probably gain by such an alteration, as these stores are often found to sell a more genuine article, and to give better weight, than other establishments. It is necessary for the shopman to be honest in dealing with subscribers, whose agent he is—indeed he has no motive to be otherwise; while it would be obviously impracticable for him to carry on an unfair trade with the public, side by side with a fair one with his employers, even if every customer were not looked

to as a future subscriber, whom it is desirable to encourage and attract.

So far all seems plain sailing ;— but here we are met by a very serious and weighty objection urged in the name of simple justice. “It is manifestly unjust (it is said) to expose Joint Stock Companies and ordinary Partnerships to the competition of associations which are exempted from the heavy registration fees and other restrictive regulations of the former, and which also enjoy the privilege of cheap arbitration and summary remedy denied to the latter.” The objection is one which must not be evaded, nor languidly and loosely met. But we think there are three considerations, which combine to deprive it of nearly all its practical force. In the first place, the encouragement and facilitation of investments for the savings of the poor has already been recognised by the legislature as a proper object for its attention. It has considered, moreover, that in this country the law affords so many casual, unintentional collateral advantages to the rich capitalist in the employment of his accumulations, that it may safely, and without incurring the imputation of injustice or partiality, aid the poor man by certain easements and exemptions which may have some countervailing operation. It does this in the case of Savings’ Banks ; it does this in the case of Friendly Societies and small Insurance Offices ;—taking care to surround them with such limitations as shall confine them to the objects for which, and the classes for whom, they were originally designed. It justifies them on a mingled plea of charity and fairness : it combats and neutralises an accidental advantage on the one side by an artificial advantage on the other. — In the second place, the objection from Joint Stock Companies has little weight : the magnitude of the one set of bodies and the insignificance of the other almost

preclude the idea of competition ;— and what is a more exact and cogent reply — the expense of registration under the Friendly Societies Act is as great in proportion to the capital of the Association, as it is under the Joint Stock Companies Act. In the case, however, of working associations and co-operative stores, which would thus be enabled to compete at an advantage with small manufacturers or handicraftsmen, in the one case, and with ordinary tradesmen and shopkeepers in the other*, — the objection is unanswerable save in one way : — *Do not deprive one party of the advantage, but extend it to the other.* Every citizen who pays his contribution to the state, and obeys the laws, is *ipso facto* entitled to the protection of those laws in every honest and legitimate undertaking, unhampered by formalities which he cannot observe, or expenses which he cannot pay : and to deny him this protection on the plea that to grant it would give him an unfair advantage over another party who has it not, is to countervail one injustice by the commission of another ; — it is to remedy the evil by extending it ; — it is for the state to compensate one citizen for the non-fulfilment of its tacit contract with him, by offering, most unpatriotically, to be equally backward in its fulfilment towards every other member of the commonwealth. Summary remedies against fraud, and prompt decision of disputes, are the indefeasible claims of every one ; and that state of things is self-condemned which is compelled to deny these to one man because to concede them would be to act inequitably to another. In this country we proceed irregularly towards all improvements : ultimate and entire rectification arises out of the grotesque dilemmas into which attempts at

* It must be observed, however, that the associations have to pay the expense of registration under the Friendly Societies Act—a burden from which the small tradesman and the private capitalist are exempt.

partial rectification have landed us ;— and in the present case, having, out of a sentiment of charity, granted easy and summary justice to Friendly Societies, we shall find ourselves dragged on, out of a sentiment of equity, to extend it to co-operative stores, and thence, tardily and reluctantly, to partnerships in general.

A very brief and simple bill was prepared and laid before the President of the Board of Trade during last session, to give the needful legality and protection to the associations we have spoken of; but, in the press of more exciting, though far more unprofitable matter, it was not found possible to introduce it. We trust, however, that it will not be allowed to lie over beyond another year.

One of the subjects most earnestly considered by the Committee on Investments in 1850, and by another which grew out of it and sat during last session, was the desirability of encouraging *partnerships with limited liability*, and the mode in which this encouragement should be afforded, if at all. This matter had already been discussed at length in a very able report drawn up at the desire of the Board of Trade, by Mr. H. Bellenden Ker, and presented to parliament in 1837, and again by a Committee of the House of Commons, presided over by Mr. Gladstone, in 1844. The evidence given, and the opinions announced, were singularly conflicting; and the judgments of the most competent lawyers and merchants utterly at variance. The balance, however, unquestionably inclined to the side of a relaxation of the present stringent law of Partnership, by which any limitation of partnership liability, except under a costly charter, is strictly prohibited; by which all partners are responsible for the debts of the concern to their last farthing; and by which any one deriving benefit from the concern in any manner, beyond the receipt of *fixed*

legal interest for money lent, is held to be a partner. The committee, which reported its labours to the House on the 8th July, 1851, while regretting the obstacles placed by the existing law of Partnership to many useful undertakings, shrank from the responsibility of giving a bold opinion in favour of the general introduction of limited liability, and resolved as follows: —

“ That the law of partnership, as at present existing, viewing its importance in reference to the commercial character and rapid increase of the population and property of the country, requires careful and immediate revision.

“ They recommend, therefore, the appointment of a Commission of adequate legal and commercial knowledge, not only to consider and prepare a consolidation of the existing laws, but also to suggest such changes in the law as the altered condition of the country may require; especial attention being paid to the establishment of improved tribunals, to decide claims by and against partners, in all partnership disputes; and also to the important and much controverted question of limited or unlimited liability of partners.”

Those who advocate the introduction of the system of limited liability in this country argue thus*: (1.) England is an exception to the rest of the world in this particular. America, France, Holland, and the Continent generally, admit, and have long admitted, partnerships with limited liability in various forms, not only without injury, but with decided public and individual advantage. In France, these partnerships are almost universal in the case of extensive undertakings, and are such favourites, that in 1847, out of the new partnerships registered, 164 were of this nature. In case of bankruptcy, it is alleged that they pay on an average much higher dividends than others. In Holland, many of the most useful projects (such as re-

* Evidence of Messrs. Mill, Ludlow, Neale, Hughes, &c. — *Partnership en Commandite*, p. 213.

claiming land from the sea) have been carried out by means of limited partnerships, into which projects, without such limitation, prudent men would not have entered. In the State of New York, which, from the enormous extension of its commerce, may be considered as a fitter parallel for us, the law of limited liability exists, guarded by the simple guarantee of publicity, and no inconvenience is found to arise therefrom.—(2.) Hundreds of undertakings, which would not only yield a fair profit to the projectors, but be of vast public advantage, are prevented in this country by the law of unlimited liability. Such are plans for local improvements, bridges, roads, &c., and in more than one instance, associations for building model lodging houses and cottages for the poor. Thousands of benevolent individuals, who would thankfully risk a hundred, or a few hundred pounds for a valuable object of this sort, in which there is a vastly preponderating probability of success, are deterred from joining in it, under a law which makes them liable for all contingencies, in the language of a great legal authority, “to their last shilling and their last acre.”—(3.) Great numbers, both of men and women, possessed of small means, to whom an increase of income is a great object, but absolute security a still greater, and who would gladly seek a higher return for a portion of their capital by investing it in industrial undertakings, dare not do so, where by the existing law they would become partners liable for the whole engagements of the concern. They are consequently driven upon landed and government securities, the price of which is thus artificially enhanced, and their interest constantly reduced.—(4.) The general desire for investments of varying return, but of limited liability, is shown by the wild and irrational rush into all undertakings, such as railway and foreign loans, where limited liability prevails. The rail-

way manias may be distinctly traced to our existing law of partnership:—an alteration, which by introducing limited liability *generally*, should take away from these undertakings their special seductive feature, would do more than any other change to check these periodical follies and the panics which invariably follow.—(5.) Commercial and industrial enterprises of magnitude would fall into the hands of more prudent men, to the incalculable gain of the public,—since it is, at all events, a *primâ facie* argument against a man's prudence, that he should engage with a number of others in an enterprise, for the success of which, not merely the sum he may embark in it, but his whole fortune, is responsible.—(6.) The security of the public which deals with these limited associations, would be increased in two ways:—in the first place, as the sum for which each partner was responsible would be duly announced and registered, the public would know to a shilling the capital on which the concern was trading,—an advantage, which under the present system it never possesses; in the second place, in case of failure, the parties who now lend money to the concern, and consequently come in *as creditors*, would in the other case have become limited partners, and their contributions or loans would therefore be *available to the creditors*.—(7.) It is urged, further, that the legislature steps out of its province when it interferes to prevent parties from combining in any manner they may think fit for legitimate and useful purposes, provided only that the public be secured against deceptive secrecy, or fraudulent misrepresentations.—(8.) And, finally, it is alleged that the law of limited liability, in the form of *commandite* Partnership, has already been sanctioned by our government, inasmuch as an act (still in force) was passed for Ireland in 1782 (21 and 22 Geo. III. c. 46.), legalising such partnerships when entered into

for periods not exceeding fourteen years, and when willing to comply with certain simple formalities.

It is not easy to weaken the cogency of arguments such as these; but it is urged by the supporters of the existing law*: (1.) That the laws of foreign countries can seldom be adopted with safety as applicable here, inasmuch as the analogy is never perfect; that peculiar circumstances and long habit may render principles safe and beneficial in America, Belgium, or Holland, which would be dangerous or noxious in England; and that partnership *en commandite* is considered by many parties not to work well in France. (2.) That however desirable a change in the law might be in poor countries, where it was important to tempt capital into industrial enterprises by every encouragement that could be offered, no such motive exists here, where the rate of interest is so low, and the amount of capital constantly seeking investment so enormous, that no project, however attended with risk, which offers a fair prospect of remuneration, ever languishes or slips through for lack of means. (3.) That if the change were complicated with such restrictions as would be needed to secure the country from its evil consequences and possible abuse, the complaints and confusions would be endless, as may be gathered from the difficulties which have arisen under the Joint Stock Act, and the Winding-up Act;—if the change were “pure and simple,”—absolute and unconditional, we should have such a sudden and terrific burst of speculation as would throw all previous manias into the shade; companies would be formed for the wildest and the most trivial projects: partnership associations would multiply, down to six-penny toyshops; the savings of the middle and working classes would rush into schemes of every con-

* Evidence of Mr. Bellenden Ker, —Jules Lechevalier, &c.

ceivable degree of delusiveness, and the most widespread ruin and the bitterest disappointment would be the result.

The conclusion which forces itself upon our minds after hearing the pleadings of the two parties, is clearly this:—That partnerships with limited liability are desirable and just,—but that great caution is needed in the introduction of them. There seems no difficulty in reconciling the two requirements,—the demands of individual interest, and of public safety. Happily, we have the opinion of an eminent lawyer and a high authority, Mr. Bellenden Ker, in his well-known report, that the proposed change might be easily and effectually added to our present law, and might be guarded by such provisions as would secure justice both to partners and to creditors;—and we have, in existing arrangements, a mode by which such limited partnerships might be established without risk of the excessive consequences which have been urged as likely to result from their sudden and unchecked prevalence. The Crown can now grant, through the instrumentality and on the responsibility of the Board of Trade, charters of incorporation, where, in its wisdom, it shall deem fit,—such charters conferring the privilege of limited liability—each shareholder being answerable only to the extent of the full amount of his share,—and enforcing publicity of accounts, shares, and transfers. But the expense of obtaining these charters has hitherto been so great as to render them virtually inaccessible to any but large undertakings and wealthy parties. It is in evidence, that a company which was formed for the purpose of improving the dwellings of the poor in the county of Gloucester, was broken up in consequence of the inability to obtain a charter except at a cost which would have been fatal to their humble means;—and a similar association in London, which did obtain such

a charter, was almost ruined by it: the charter and the legal expenses attending its procural, exceeding 1100*l.*, of which 724*l.* went to the various departments of the government. The Committee of last session recommend, that charters conferring limited liability shall be granted on much easier terms, and on certain fixed rules; and Mr. Ker appears to concur in the suggestion. By this means all *bonâ fide*, reasonable, and hopeful enterprises might be rendered practicable and easy; while at the same time, the wild burst of speculation and fraud, anticipated from a simple and absolute legislation of limited liability, would be avoided.

Limitation of liability, however, is chiefly desired for the sake of the middle classes and the public; the poor care little about it; the amount which they would venture would generally be their all. There is, however, one form of it which it is thought might greatly benefit them, and which is strongly recommended by so high an authority as Mr. Mill. This is *partnership en commandite*, which affords peculiar facilities for the union of large and small capitalists in joint undertakings; and would enable manufacturers, for instance, in this country to associate their saving workmen with them as partners having a direct interest in the success of the concern, without at the same time giving them the powers or privileges of partners to interfere, to mismanage, or to peculate, as they might do by the existing law. By the law of *commandite*, commercial or manufacturing companies may be formed with any number of partners, who are divided into two classes,—the *general* partners, who are usually (or are supposed to be) the largest capitalists, who are responsible to the public to the extent of their entire property, and who retain the uncontrolled management of the business; and the *special* partners (as they are termed in New York), the *commanditaires* (as they are named in

France), who are liable only to the amount of the capital they have subscribed (*which amount is duly advertised*), and who are precluded by law from any interference in the conduct of the enterprise. By this arrangement, the *managing partners*, of whom alone the public has cognisance, are, as by our ordinary law, responsible with their whole property; and, as against them, the public has therefore the same security as now; while, as against the inferior or special partners, whom it does not know, and who—as comparatively exempt from risk themselves—might be disposed to be more reckless and venturesome in their mode of carrying on business, it has the security that they are entirely excluded from any share in the conduct of the concern. The public, again, has the further security that, in case of bankruptcy, the property of these secondary partners goes to swell the *assets* of the estate; whereas, had they merely *lent* their money to the concern (as, under our law, they probably would have done), they would claim as creditors, and so swell the *liabilities* of the estate. To the chief partners, this law offers the advantage of enabling them to increase their own means by the contributions of others (whose knowledge of their skill and integrity induces them to confide their smaller capitals to their charge), without feeling that they are incurring debt thereby; and they are thus enabled to carry out many enterprises which, however safe and profitable, they could not otherwise have undertaken. To the secondary partners, the law offers an easy and advantageous mode of becoming partakers in the profits of capital—a great object of ambition with all the industrious—with only a modified degree of risk, and of thus securing a higher return upon their savings than mere government securities can ever offer. It enables them to lend money at a rate of

interest *fluctuating with the success of the undertaking*, instead of at a fixed rate—a plan surely quite legitimate and beneficial both to borrower and lender.

Now, we are quite aware that there may be objections to the introduction of such a law into England. It is possible—nay, probable—that disappointment might be the most general issue of the associations in question. We are not blind to, nor would we make light of, the chance that the hard savings of workmen may in some cases be lost, by entrusting them to imprudent or dishonest employers, or by the facilities afforded to over-rash and confident speculators. But a regard for the wishes of industrious and respectable operatives, seems to demand that the plan should have full consideration, and, if possible, a fair trial. Among them, as we have often had occasion to observe, there has long existed a rooted dissatisfaction with the remuneration of their labour. They are convinced that the division of profits between the employers and themselves—of the produce of their conjoined capital and labour—is unfair; that they, as labourers, receive only scanty and inadequate wages, while the capitalist, their master, pockets enormous returns upon his investment, which *they*, as they conceive it, make profitable for him. That this impression is generally unfounded, and is often the very reverse of true, few persons closely acquainted with the matter will dispute; but it is so ingrained into “the artisan mind,” and has been so recklessly confirmed by the wild assertions of both orators and writers, that nothing but experience will disabuse them of it. It is, on all accounts, very desirable that workmen should, where it is practicable, be made practically cognisant of the uncertainties of the manufacturing or other enterprise in which they are employed—that their interest should be more closely and more *obviously* bound up

with those of the capitalist who employs them—that they should learn, by individual experience, what the profits of capital, when fairly reckoned, really are. As long as such participation is denied them, they will continue, and perhaps ought to continue, dissatisfied, jealous, and suspicious. They would not perhaps, on the whole, be richer; but they would assuredly be wiser and more contented for the experiment. To some such plan we should look, not without hope, as the best means of eradicating that hostile feeling which too often subsists between the operative classes and their employers. The latter, we are sure, would be gainers by the attempt. A manufacturing enterprise, in which all the head workmen should be partners *en commandite*, and should, in consequence, feel their own interests bound up with the success of the concern, without having any right of interference with its management—would find itself possessed of quite a new element of prosperity. Economy would be studied—processes would be shortened—waste would be avoided, and energy would be infused into every department, to a degree unattainable in concerns conducted in the ordinary way. It would be as if the master could be omnipresent—personally and incessantly watching each department and subdivision of the business. But the chief benefit most unquestionably would be this: that, if successful, the operative would cease to be jealous of his master's prosperity, because he would be a sharer in it; and, if unsuccessful, he would learn to “accuse no man falsely, and to be content with his wages.” The bitter controversy between capital and labour, as to the division of their joint earnings, would receive the only satisfactory solution of which it is capable, by combining the two controversialists in one actual experiment together.

Some of our Christian Socialist friends will imagine they can trace, in certain passages and expressions of this Article, indications of an approaching conversion to their views. We can encourage no such hopes. We must remind them that we are the advocates of nothing here which we have not recommended often before ; and we pray them to observe that there is a wide difference between wishing that the principle of co-operation should have a fair field, and believing that it ever can, or ought to, supersede the principle of competition. We are as far as ever from conceiving, that working men's associations and co-operative stores will prove the agencies they are expected to be for the regeneration of our social state. We anticipate, that the attempts to combine the functions, and monopolise the profits, of labour, capital, and superintendence in the same hands, will, in the majority of instances, result, as they always have resulted, in failure and disappointment ; that the same good sense, and the same experience, which originally led to the separation of the capitalist and labourer—operative and superintendent—manufacturer and merchant—producer and distributor—will reproduce and perpetuate these distinctions ; and that their harmonious combination as separate functions, and not their artificial amalgamation, will continue for an indefinite period—in spite of occasional and experimental exceptions—the normal condition of the several elements of the economic world. Still, though Christian Economists, and not Christian Socialists ; though holding the great truths of Economic Science to be ascertained and unassailable, and the great facts, propensities, and principles of human nature to be permanent and ineradicable ; though convinced, therefore, that schemes which run counter to those truths must come to nought, and that hopes founded upon the extinction or trans-

miration of these propensities and principles, are built upon the same: yet, above all and before all, we are lovers of justice. We know that no experiment can be fairly pronounced upon till it has been fairly tried. We know that the trial and failure of any scheme can alone disabuse its advocates of their sanguine anticipations. We believe that the working classes now possess so much power and so much intelligence, that it is idle, and would be foolish, to thwart any of their legitimate endeavours to help themselves, and to find their own way out of their own dilemmas: and that in political position and in mental activity, at least, if not in wisdom, they have passed that stage of helpless and submissive childhood, in which the State could and ought to prevent them from "swearing to their own hurt," and might fitly step in to spare them from learning in the common and costly school of human nature—that of experience. We think, moreover, that these co-operative associations may be one of the most powerful of the many influences now at work for the education of the lower orders of the people; that wisdom will be gained, if not wealth, from the industry, self-control, and mutual forbearance needed to conduct them; and that—like the children of the wise old man, who set them to dig over his land, in all directions, for hidden riches (which was not gold, as they supposed, but the fertility which they thus unintentionally conferred upon the soil)—these associated labourers may find in their experiment, not indeed the treasure which they seek, but a treasure not less real nor less lasting. The principle of association is unquestionably a mighty and prolific one;—if, as Socialists conceive, it does really contain a secret strength, by virtue of which society can be purified, its wounds healed, its heartburnings soothed, and its bitter animosities lulled to rest for ever,—why, the fairer field

we afford to its development, the sooner and the surer will this vivifying energy be brought to light. If, as older and soberer men—who “stand upon the old way”—incline to fear, these sanguine hopes are in the main delusive, and altogether exaggerated,—why, the more free and unhampered be the opportunities offered for the trial, the more clearly and promptly will the delusion be made manifest. At all events, it is not well to leave to the advocates of Socialism the possibility of ascribing the failure of their schemes, not to the inherent unsoundness of their principles, or the native impracticability of their means, but to artificial impediments—to the injustice of the law—to the envy or the enmity of the rich and great.

ENGLISH SOCIALISM.*

GENIUS, which is always welling up in copious streams from the great field of humanity, flows in different channels at different eras. In early times it took a warlike form, and the men of genius were conquerors and heroes. In later ages, as the world grew more pacific, and the relations of society more complex, the art of government became more important than the art of conquest, and the men of genius were statesmen and civilians. At other times the development of genius gave birth in predominating measure to painters and poets, who transferred to their canvas or their pages those graceful forms and exquisite imaginations which became to art the models of eternal beauty. The superb achievements of which human intellect is capable have in recent years chiefly shown themselves in the sphere of physical science, and in the application of scientific discoveries to the furtherance of material civilisation; and natural philosophers and engineers have been the real poets (*ποιηταί*, makers or doers) and wonder-workers of our day. And now, when almost every

* From the "Edinburgh Review."

1. *Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet*. An Autobiography. London: 1850.
2. *Cheap Clothes and Nasty*. By PARSON LOT. London: 1850.
3. *Christian Socialism*. A Dialogue. London: 1850.
4. *The Leader*. Epistolæ obscurorum virorum, xii. xiii. Communism. London: 1850.
5. *Système des Contradictions Economiques*. Par M. PROUDHON. Paris: 1850.
6. *Distribution of Wealth*. By W. THOMPSON. A new Edition. By W. PARE. London: 1850.

desideratum in this line which imagination can conceive is either supplied, or in the way of being so—when turf is being made into candles, and water into gas—when the Isthmus of Panama is about to be cut through, and Paris and London are united by continuous wires—when we travel with the speed of wings, and communicate with the speed of light—it does seem as if the time were come for genius to find a new field for its development and display; and there are many hopeful indications that the same glorious faculty which has reaped harvests of enduring laurels in most other departments, is about to take up the case of man himself. The time is come for the leading spirits to devote themselves, heart and soul, to the solution of those perilous enigmas of life which have so long formed our perplexity and our despair, and to the cure of those social anomalies which darken the fair face of the modern world, and make us feel, sadly and humbly, how imperfect and partial is the civilisation we exult in. It cannot be that the same intellect—which has wrung from nature her most hidden secrets, which has triumphed over the most gigantic material obstructions, which has “exhausted worlds and then imagined new,” which has discovered and described laws operating in regions of space, separated from us by a distance so vast that human imagination cannot picture it, and arithmetical language can hardly express it—should not, when fairly applied to social and administrative science, be competent to rectify our errors, and to smooth our path; unless, indeed, society take refuge in the dreary creed, which never shall be ours, that the problem before us is insoluble and the wretchedness around us inherent and incurable.

“If this were so,” says Mr. Mill,—“if the bulk of the human race are always to remain as at present, slaves to toil in which they *have* no interest, and there-

fore *feel* no interest — drudging from early morning till late at night for bare necessities, and with all the intellectual and moral deficiencies which this implies — without interests or sentiments as members of society, and with a sense of injustice rankling in their minds, equally for what they have not and for what others have, — I know not what there is which should make a person with any capacity of reason concern himself about the destinies of the human race. There would be no wisdom for any one, but in extracting from life, with epicurean indifference, as much personal satisfaction for himself and those with whom he sympathises, as it can yield without injury to any one, and let the unmeaning bustle of so-called civilised existence roll by unheeded. But there is no ground for such a view of human affairs.” There is a far greater probability of truth in a remark we once heard from Dr. Chalmers, — “that the world is so constituted that if we were morally right we should be physically happy;” and that all our sufferings and evils (so far as they exceed those inseparable from a finite and imperfect nature) may be traced to ignorance or neglect of those laws of nature which God has established for our good and has displayed for our instruction. We agree with the Socialists in holding that the world can never have been intended to be, and will not long remain, what it is. The apparent contradiction between the vast amount of unrelieved misery and the vast amount of energetic benevolence now existing in our country, which strikes so many with despair, inspires us, on the contrary, with the most sanguine hopes; because, in that benevolence, we see ample means of remedying nearly all our evils — means hitherto impotent and unavailing solely because misapplied. There is now, more than ever before, an adequate knowledge of the ills which are to be battled with and conquered; there is energy without stint or

limit waiting, panting to be let loose upon it ; there are agents without number only anxious to be shown how they can do good, without at the same time doing a more than counterbalancing amount of evil, — sometimes, alas ! *not* waiting for this guidance ; and there is money ready to flow in the most liberal abundance for the furtherance of any scheme which promises to relieve want or to assist exertion. All that is needed is the wisdom to direct this vast machinery for good, and a strong conviction on the part of the public that, unless it can be placed under the guidance of sound principle, it must be mischievous and not beneficent. This great lesson is at length beginning to be learned.

There are two classes of philanthropists — the feelers and the thinkers — the impulsive and the systematic — those who devote themselves to the relief or the mitigation of existing misery, and those who, with a longer patience, a deeper insight, and a wider vision, endeavour to prevent its recurrence and perpetuation by an investigation and eradication of its causes. The former — in imitation, as they imagine, of their Master — go from house to house assuaging momentary wretchedness, but alas ! not always “doing good ;” relieving present evils, but too often leaving an increasing crop ever springing up under their footsteps ; attended and rewarded by blessings, but doomed, probably, at length to feel that they have ill deserved them. Far different is the course of the latter class : their life is spent in a laborious research into remote and hidden causes ; in a patient and painful analysis of the operation of principles from the misapplication or forgetfulness of which our social disorders have for the most part sprung ; in sowing seeds and elucidating laws that are to destroy the evil at a distant date which they themselves may never see, — by which sometimes its pressure may be aggravated during the period which they do see. They are neither re-

warded by the gratitude of those for whom they toil — since the benefits they confer are often blessings in disguise and *in futurum* ; — nor gratified by beholding the fruit of their benevolent exertions — for the harvest may not be ripe till all of them have passed away and till most of them have been forgotten. Nay, more, they are misrepresented, misconstrued, accused of hardness of heart by a misconceiving generation, and too often cursed and thwarted by the very men in whose service they have spent their strength. And while those who have chosen the simpler and easier path are reaping blessings in return for the troubles they have ignorantly stimulated and perpetuated by relieving, these men — the true martyrs of philanthropy — must find their consolation and support in unswerving adherence to sound principles and unshrinking faith in final victory, and must seek their recompense — if they need one — in the tardy recognition of their virtues by a distant and a wiser time. While therefore the warm and ardent natures, which can find no peace except in the free indulgence of their kindly impulses, are worthy of all love, and even, amid all the mischief they create, of some admiration for their sacrifices and zeal — and while we fully admit that they also may have a mission to fulfil — we cast in our lot with their more systematic fellow-labourers who address themselves to the harder, rougher, more unthankful task, of attacking the source rather than the symptoms — of eradicating social evils rather than alleviating them.

We can, however, sympathise keenly with those excellent women — and those kind-hearted men cast in somewhat the same mould — who ask, “ Are we, then, to sit by with folded hands, and listen to the groans and gaze upon the misery around us, till political and economic science — which we confess our incompetence to understand — has discovered and established the



systems and institutions which will in time rectify the world? Are we to do nothing, lest we should sow some tares among our wheat — lest in doing good we should do some harm also?" By no means. There is an ample field for every species of benevolence: and for this very numerous and most valuable class of philanthropists, the investigation and assistance of individual cases of difficulty and distress is the appropriate path. If, instead of miscellaneous charity, which is at once so easy and so injurious, and instead of liberal subscriptions to charitable institutions, which are so often misdirected and misconducted, they would take two or three struggling individuals, or two or three destitute families, under their special charge, thoroughly examine into their condition and its causes, aid them to escape from it or to mitigate its hardships, and put them in the way of an attainable livelihood, they would find that such a course might cost them more trouble, it is true, but less money; and they would assuredly soon acquire the conviction that they had done more real good, and conferred more lasting happiness, than they could have brought about by ten times the outlay in subscriptions, — at the same time, that at all events, the service they had done will be unalloyed. The Governess' Benevolent Institution we believe to be one of the most useful, praiseworthy, and best-conducted that exists, and least open to economic criticism; but, supposing each lady who, in the course of her life, subscribes 100*l.* to its funds and spends days in canvassing, personally or by letter, for an extension of its benefits to some favoured *protégée* were to keep her eye fixed upon two or three individual governesses instead. Let her aid them in their struggles, advise them in their difficulties, comfort them in their distress, take them in for a period when they want a home, and, if they needed, (which, in case the surveillance had been judicious and effective, they seldom

would.) console them with a small pension in their age:—would not the aggregate number of cases thus relieved and the aggregate of happiness thus conferred be far greater and far surer than by the present system? To make our meaning clearer, we will quote from “Alton Locke” a case of heart-rending distress; which, though in a work of fiction, we willingly believe—or rather, we are compelled to believe, however unwillingly—to be deplorably too near the truth:—

“There was no bed in the room,—no table. It was bare of furniture, comfortless, and freezing cold; but, with the exception of the plaster dropping from the roof, and the broken windows patched with rags and paper, there was a scrupulous neatness about the whole which contrasted strangely with the filth and slovenliness outside. On a broken chair by the chimney sat a miserable old woman, fancying that she was warming her hands over embers that had long been cold, and muttering to herself, with palsied lips, about the guardians and the work-house; while upon a few rags on the floor lay a girl, ugly, marked with small-pox, hollow-eyed, emaciated,—her only bed-clothes the skirt of a large handsome new riding-habit, at which two other girls, wan and tawdry, were stitching busily as they sat right and left of her on the floor. The old woman took no notice of us as we entered; but one of the girls looked up, and with a pleased gesture of recognition, put her fingers on her lips, and whispered ‘Ellen’s asleep.’

“‘I am not asleep, dears,’ answered a faint unearthly voice; ‘I was only praying. Is that Mr. Mackaye?’

“‘Aye, my lasses; but ha’ ye gotten na fire the nicht?’

“‘No, said one of them bitterly, ‘we’ve earned no fire to-night by fair trade, or foul either.’

“I saw Mackaye slip something into the hand of one of the girls, and whisper ‘A half hundred weight of coals;’ to which she replied with an eager look of gratitude I can never forget, and hurried out. Then the sufferer, as if taking advantage of her absence, began to speak quickly and hurriedly.

“‘Oh, Mr. Mackaye,—dear kind Mr. Mackaye,—do speak to her; and do speak to poor Lizzy here! I’m not afraid to

say it before her, because she is more gentle-like, and has'nt learnt to say bad words yet; but do speak to them, and tell them not to go the bad way, like all the rest. Tell them it 'll never prosper. I know it's want that drives them to it, as it drives all of us,—but tell them it's best to starve and die honest girls, than to go about with the shame and the curse of God on their hearts for the sake of keeping this vile, poor, miserable body together for a few short years more in this world of sorrow. . . . For Lizzy here, I did hope she had repented of it after all my talking to her; but since I've been so bad, and the girls have had to keep me most of the time, she's gone out o' nights just as bad as ever.'

"Lizzy had hid her face in her hands the greater part of this speech. Now she looked up passionately,—almost fiercely:—

" 'Repent!—I have repented,—I repent of it every hour: I hate myself, and hate all the world because of it; but I must—I must: I cannot see her starve, and I cannot starve myself. When she first fell sick she kept on as long as she could, doing what she could; and then between us we only earned three shillings a week: . . . and now Ellen can't work at all; and there's four of us with the old lady to keep off two's work that couldn't keep themselves alone.'

"At this moment the other girl entered with the coals. 'We have been telling Mr. Mackaye every thing,' said poor Lizzy.

" 'A pleasant story, is'nt it? Oh! if that fine lady, as we're making this riding-habit for, would just spare half the money that goes in dressing her up to ride in the park, to send us out to the colonies, wouldn't I be an honest girl there? May be an honest man's wife! Oh my God! wouldn't I slave my fingers to the bone for him! wouldn't I mend my life there! It 'ud be like getting into heaven out of hell. But now we must—we must, I tell you.'

"And she sat down and began stitching frantically at the riding-habit, from which the other girl had hardly lifted her eyes or hands for a moment during our visit."

Now the question we wish our readers to ask themselves is this: If each lady or gentleman, whose soul is harrowed by hearing of such wretchedness as is here

pictured, instead of rushing wildly to join or to found a society for sending distressed needlewomen out of the country by wholesale, would *take in hand some one individual case*, relieve the momentary want, search into the causes which have led to it, give these poor girls temporary work, put them in the way of regular employment, and, if found desirable, aid them, by private and careful benevolence, to reach the colonies, — would not the amount of misery assuaged and prevented be not only infinitely greater, but the good done incalculably more unalloyed? To be sure, the one method is easy and immediate, the other would be laborious, might be slow; the one is public, the other private and unostentatious; but if done in secret, we are told it shall be rewarded openly. We are far from wishing to discourage combined benevolence: we do not for a moment mean to maintain that all charitable associations are unsound in their basis and noxious in their operation. What we desire to inculcate is this: that those whose feelings are too vivid, whose judgment is too impatient, or whose reasoning faculties are too untrained, *to allow them to study philanthropy as a science*, have no business with charity on a great scale, and cannot safely deal with *institutions* which are engines of immense good or immense evil, according as they harmonise with or violate those principles of economical philosophy, to the investigation of which these parties confess themselves, by temperament or by capacity, inadequate. With such powerful instruments none should have any thing to do whose feelings are too quick and vehement to leave their heads clear; and it is not from those who read much and see a little of particular forms and scenes of misery — whose eyes are suddenly opened, by such revelations as the press has lately poured forth, to the existence of an abyss of wretchedness of which, till now, they had never dreamed, — who are dazzled with the flood of darkness

let in upon them, — and who have no experience to sober their conclusions and no previous knowledge to mitigate their horror, — that a comprehensive and unexaggerated judgment can be looked for. It is not from men whom the endurance or the spectacle of suffering has driven frantic, that cool deliberation, needful caution, or wise and salutary action can be hoped.

The pamphlet at the head of our article, entitled "Cheap Clothes and Nasty," is a proof of this. It is well known to proceed from the pen of Mr. Kingsley, a clergyman of the Church of England, a zealous and experienced parish priest, a gentleman of great literary ability, of very impatient benevolence, and evidently of somewhat imperious and supercilious temper towards all who would check his hasty conclusions, or proceed by a different path to the attainment of a common end. His feelings were strongly excited by Mr. Mayhew's letters in the "Morning Chronicle;" and, as he himself states, he incontinently became demented, and put forth a tract full of raving wholly unworthy of his scholarship and station, and containing much abuse of the economists, who so far, after all, are only philanthropists more sober, thoughtful, and wary than himself. He opens thus:—

"King Ryence, says the legend of Prince Arthur, wore a paletot trimmed with kings' beards. In the first French revolution (so Carlyle assures us) there were at Meudon tanneries of human skins. Mammon, at once tyrant and revolutionary, follows both these noble examples—in a more respectable way doubtless, for Mammon hates cruelty; bodily pain is his devil—the worst evil which he, in his effeminacy, can conceive. So he shrieks benevolently when a drunken soldier is flogged; but he trims his paletots, and adorns his legs, with the flesh of men and the skins of women, with degradation, pestilence, heathendom, despair; and then chuckles complacently over the smallness of his tailor's bills. Hypocrite! — straining at a gnat, and swallowing a camel!

“ ‘The man is mad,’ says Mammon, smiling in supercilious pity. Yes, Mammon; mad as Paul before Festus; and for much the same reason too. Much learning has made us mad. From two articles in the ‘Morning Chronicle,’ on the condition of the working tailors, *we learnt too much to leave us altogether masters of ourselves.*”

Now, that reading such accounts of the sordid wretchedness of thousands of his fellow-creatures should have deprived Mr. Kingsley of his self-possession, is natural and pardonable—an amiable weakness at the worst. That he should have been roused to spread far and wide a knowledge of those facts which had so startled and pained him, was natural and right also, *provided he took due pains in the first instance to assure himself of the unexaggerated correctness of these facts;* but when he proceeded to assign the cause and to vituperate the imagined authors of this suffering, a conscientious man ought to have felt that something more was demanded than a mere surrendering of himself to the guidance of his feelings. A few hours of cool reflection, a little charity towards antagonistic reasoners, and some faint mistrust of his own mastery of a science which—to judge from the language he employs—he loathes and despises too much to have studied, would have induced him to suppress the foolish sneers at political economy with which his writings abound, and would have saved him from sending forth such disreputable rant as this:—

“ Sweet competition! Heavenly maid! Now-a-days hymned alike by penny-a-liners and philosophers as the ground of all society—the only real preserver of the earth! Why not of heaven too? Perhaps there is competition among the angels, and Gabriel and Raphael have won their rank by doing the maximum of worship on the minimum of grace? We shall know some day. In the meanwhile, ‘these are thy works, thou Parent of all good!’ Man eating man, eaten by man, in every variety of method and degree. Why does not some

enthusiastic political economist write an epic on ‘The Consecration of Cannibalism!’”

We should not be disposed to treat with any great severity the absurd or violent language of a benevolent man whose understanding has been driven desperate by the sight of suffering which he cannot relieve, and which he feels certain ought not to exist; but in the diatribes against political economy,—which is merely *benevolence under the guidance of science*,—and which so many sincere philanthropists delight to study, a feeling very different from philanthropy may be detected; an intolerant, contemptuous spirit; a restless unwillingness to submit to criticism, examination, or control; and a proneness to have recourse to persecution and abuse,—which call for the strongest reprobation. In all times and among all classes it has been the clue of the violent, the impulsive, and the fanatical, to cast vituperative epithets on troublesome opponents. The hasty innovator abuses the cautious reformer as an advocate of despotism; the timid conservative confounds the friend of sober freedom with the anarchist; and the man of orthodox but narrow piety is not ashamed to fling the name of Atheist upon all whose conceptions of the Deity are purer and loftier than his own. The unreasoning philanthropist, grown insolent from a persuasion of his own righteousness, goes to work in a similar manner: he does not scruple to inveigh against all, as cold and hard-hearted, who are clear-headed enough to see and to denounce the evil consequences which must result from his inconsiderate and short-sighted proceedings,—all whom a deep, almost religious, sense of their responsibility, forbids to act before they think. In the very spirit of the Pharisee, he assumes that he alone is sympathising and tender-hearted; and that all those who—taught by a longer experience, a deeper insight, a more studious

inquiry,—would prevent him from losing the battle, by charging headlong before the line is formed, or the weapons distributed, or the ground examined, are selfish, indifferent, and unfeeling. Little do the mere impulsive philanthropists know, and ill can they appreciate, the strenuous effort, the stern and systematic self-control by which the votary of economic science, the benevolent *man of principle*, keeps his head cool and clear in the midst of the miseries he is called upon to contemplate; and the resolute nerve which is needed to throw cold water on the mischievous schemes of sanguine and compassionate contrivers. While these men rush fiercely on social evils, fancying it possible to sweep them away by a *coup de main*, and always insist upon scrambling out of the bog on the wrong side, simply because it is the nearest;—the very aim of the philosophy they misconstrue and decry, is to save them from the sin and the remorse of aggravating the evils both deplore, by setting out to combat them upon a wrong system. Its purpose is, to teach them *how* to combat, and it seeks to marshal them so as to secure the victory: though, in their self-opinionated and suspicious haste, they accuse it of lukewarmness or of treachery, and blindly commit themselves to the keeping of blind guides. We will not fall into their error, and proclaim the political economists to be the only genuine philanthropists; but we do deliberately claim for them the merit of the highest and most difficult order of benevolence. We claim for them the character of being, with the exception of those laborious and searching administrators of private charity, of whom we have spoken above, almost the only philanthropists whose efforts do not issue in a preponderance of evil; the only ones who have the manliness to withstand hasty impulses, the industry to investigate patiently before they decide, the judgment to allow the head to direct, while the heart prompts to action; the

only ones whose charity is under the guidance of a strict conscience, a lofty purpose, and a humble mind ; the only ones, therefore, whose benevolence rises from a mere good feeling, to the height and the dignity of a virtue.

Mr. Kingsley, therefore, and writers of his school, when they permit themselves to indulge in language calculated to raise distrust and prejudice against economic thinkers, are guilty, not only of bearing false witness against fellow-citizens and fellow-labourers, but of leading the zeal of the humane away from the direction in which alone it can yield the fruit desired. For, all schemes of social amelioration which violate the principles of economic science, must come to nought ;—all which are consonant to them will find, from economists, a ready welcome and hearty co-operation. It is probably because Mr. Kingsley has a dim consciousness that sound science will condemn his prospects and detect their fallacy, that he indulges in such bitter diatribes against it. He has satisfied himself with a half comprehension of the subject, and appears to have shrunk from the intellectual effort which a thorough investigation would require. An inquiry so vast, so difficult, so momentous,—where a false doctrine or a false step may involve consequences which will echo through all time,—demands no common qualities. It demands, primarily and pre-eminently, a close observation and humble imitation of the plans of Providence, as far as it is given to man to discern them, and to aid in their accomplishment ; it demands profound compassion, but profounder patience ; boundless sympathy with every form of suffering, combined with quiet resolution in the application of the most searching probe ; an unshaken conviction that no great cardinal truth of science can be discarded with impunity, or worshipped and followed without leading to ultimate and mighty

good ; a firm faith that sound principles will, in God's good time, however slowly, and through whatever tribulation, work out his merciful and happy ends ; and that no *short cuts* unsanctioned by these principles—such as human infirmity and natural impatience under suffering, either witnessed or endured, are constantly tempting us to take—can lead us one moment sooner to our goal ; and, finally, it demands nerve to wait, alike through the distresses of others or our own, till the appropriate seed has ripened into the appointed harvest. Providence makes no short cuts ; and by the whole course of history has taught us that, if we attempt them, failure and disappointment must be the inevitable issue. “ Patient, because eternal ; ” acting by grand and immutable laws, which it is the province of science to discover, and the part of wisdom to obey ; silent, steady, and unswerving ; “ without haste, but without rest ; ” the great Ruler of humanity leads us onwards towards the accomplishment of our destiny, in a progress which we cannot quicken, but may retard, by endeavouring to withdraw ourselves from his ordinances, and accelerate his march. “ La Providence,” says M. Guizot, “ ne s'inquiète pas de tirer aujourd'hui la conséquence du principe qu'elle a posé hier ;—elle la tirera dans les siècles, quand l'heure sera venue ; et pour raisonner lentement selon nous, sa logique n'est pas moins sûre. La Providence a ses aises dans le temps ; elle y marche en quelque sorte comme les dieux d'Homère dans l'espace,—elle fait un pas, et des siècles se trouvent écoulés.”

The form which the ideas of many of the anti-economic philanthropists of whom we have spoken have of late assumed, tends towards an entire remodelling of the existing arrangements of society. In one shape or another, the doctrines of communism or socialism have acquired an importance and spread to an extent

which entitle them to serious and dispassionate consideration. As long as socialism was confined to the turbulent, the wild, and the disreputable, and was associated with tenets which made it at once disgusting and contemptible, perhaps the wisest plan was to pass it over in silence, and suffer it to die of its own inherent weakness. But now, when it has appeared in a soberer guise and purified from much of its evil intermixtures; when it has shown itself an actual and energetic reality in France; when it has spread among the intelligent portions of the working classes in our own country more extensively than is commonly believed; when it raises its head under various modifications, and often as it were unconsciously, in the disquisitions which issue from the periodical press; when a weekly journal, conducted with great ability as to everything but logic, is devoted to its propagation; and when clergymen of high literary reputation give in their scarcely qualified adherence, and are actively engaged in reducing to practice their own peculiar modification of the theory—it would no longer be kindly or decorous, to ignore a subject which is so deeply interesting to thousands of our countrymen; and we believe we shall be doing good service by attempting, in a clear and concise form, to extract the truth and eliminate the error which are so strangely intermingled in the system,—by a generous recognition of all that is sound and valuable, and a frank exposure, in no bitter or contemptuous spirit, of whatever is erroneous, untenable, and pernicious.

Socialism is no new doctrine. From the earliest times men have been shocked and grieved by the evils which have prevailed in every land and in every form which society has yet assumed: subtle and ingenious thinkers have imagined model republics in which no misery should exist; and zealous and earnest philan-

thropists have endeavoured to realise these high imaginations and put them in actual operation. The societies thus conceived or created have assumed every possible variety of form. We have had republican societies, like Plato's, Fourier's, and Babœuf's; hierarchical and aristocratic, like St. Simon's; theocratic, like the Essenes; despotic, like that of the old Peruvians and that of the Jesuits in Paraguay. Some have been based on purely material principles, like Mr. Owen's; some have been profoundly spiritual and religious, like the Moravians; some maintain the family arrangements, some altogether merge them; some recommend celibacy, as the Essenes; some enforce it, as the Shakers; some, like the Owenites, relax the marriage tie; some, like the Harmonists, control it; some, like the Moravians, hold it sacred and indissoluble;—others, again, like Plato and the Anabaptists of Munster, advocate a community of women. Some would divide the wealth of the society equally among all the members; some, as Fourier, unequally. But one great idea pervades them all—community of property, more or less complete and unreserved—common labour for the common good.

Now, we are little disposed to break butterflies upon the wheel.* We have, too, a deep sympathy with men,

* This passage, and several others in this Paper, gave serious offence to some estimable individuals, of whom the author would be sorry to be supposed to speak, as he certainly does not think, without sincere respect. He was severely blamed for having used so contemptuous an expression as that of "breaking butterflies upon the wheel," in reference to two men of such unquestionable ability and eminence as Mr. Maurice and Mr. Kingsley; and had he done so, the blame would have been richly merited. But a more careful reading of the passage would have shown his somewhat hasty censurers, that his *dislike* to "break butterflies upon the wheel," is alleged precisely as his reason for directing his criticism against Messrs. Maurice and Kingsley,—to whose high ability, lofty character, and vigorous earnestness of purpose, he is glad of this opportunity of bearing willing testimony. For the severity with which

and classes of men, who are endeavouring to struggle upwards under popular obloquy, and to cast off a bad reputation, either by showing that they have never deserved it, or that they deserve it no longer. In speaking, therefore, of socialism, we shall not attempt to excite prejudice against it by calling to mind what it *has* been, what bad company it has kept, to what conclusions it might be logically driven, with what scandalous and frightful scenes it has been connected in past time and in other lands. We shall not attempt to show what a poor intellectual development has prevailed in all the societies of which it has been the foundation; we shall not crucify afresh the low and fatal doctrine of the Owenites, and of nearly all the communists, in deifying the omnipotence of external circumstances; we shall not again expose that sad mixture of despotism and licentiousness which desecrated and destroyed St. Simonism; we shall not take advantage of the admission of the most recent and almost official advocate of communism, Mr. Thornton Hunt, that community of property, logically followed out, will, in the end, destroy the institution of marriage. We will forgive the communists all their unlucky associations and all their disreputable antecedents; and we proceed to criticise their theory and their proceedings solely in the modified and sobered form which they have now assumed. The position which they take is this :—

Society is altogether out of joint. Its anomalies, its

he has spoken of those who, directly or implicitly, hold up economists and economic science to public hatred, as the negation and not the embodiment of philanthropy, and of Mr. Kingsley as one of the chief sinners in this line, he has no apology to offer and no recantation to make. It would be an easy, but not a pleasant task, to cite from Mr. Kingsley's writings, passages in abundance which would amply justify the language of reprobation, which the author has felt called upon to use.

disfigured aspects, its glaring inequalities, the sufferings of the most numerous portion of it, are monstrous, indefensible, and yearly increasing: mere palliatives, mere slow improvements, mere gradual ameliorations will not meet its wants; it must be *remodelled*, not merely furbished up. Political economy has hitherto had it all its own way; and the shocking condition into which it has brought us, shows that its principles must be strangely inadequate or unsound. The miseries of the great mass of the people,—their inability to find work, or to obtain, in return for such work as can be performed in reasonable time and by ordinary strength, a sufficiency of the comforts and necessities of life,—may nearly all be traced to one source—*competition*, instead of combination. The antagonistic and regenerative principle which must be introduced, is *association*. Let workmen associate with one another, instead of competing with one another, and there will be work and wages enough for all. Competition is a cruel and unchristian system: association breathes the very spirit of our divine Master.—Such is the ground taken by Messrs. Kingsley and Maurice; such is the foundation of the various associations of working men which have been recently formed in London and in Paris, and which are spreading through the country; and such we are willing to regard as the form which English socialism or communism has assumed, and under which it has to be discussed.

In the first place, the assertion that “political economy has hitherto had it all its own way,” and is, therefore, chargeable with the present state of things, we meet with the most indignant and peremptory denial. It is not only not true, but is precisely the reverse of true. Economists affirm, and with perfect justice, that the existing wretchedness of England is directly traceable to ignorance, neglect, and systematic

violation of the principles of political economy. It is difficult to name a single precept of that science, which has not been either lost sight of, or habitually contravened. Political economy says, Industry ought to be as unshackled as the wind; restriction cripples it; protection misdirects it; the two together diminish its productiveness, and the number of mouths it can support. Yet till five years ago, when, within the historic period, *has* English industry been free and unimpeded? Political economy, re-echoing Christianity and common sense, long since proclaimed "that if any man would not work, neither should he eat:"—our law has enacted that a man shall eat, whether he will work or not. Political economy, repeating the simple teachings of morality, pronounced that if a man married without means or prospects, and brought children into the world whom he was unable to support, he acted unjustly and selfishly, as well as imprudently, and that the correction of his fault should be left to its natural results:—the law stepped in between the cause and its consequence, between the folly and its cure, and declared that if he could not support his own children, the prudent, the industrious, and the self-denying should do it for him. Political economy, reiterating the dictates of nature, proclaimed that the larger the family a man had to support by his labour, the scantier must be the allowance of each member of it; the common custom, till 1834, was to increase the peasant's wages or allowance with every additional child that was born to him. Political economy said to the labourer, If population increases faster than the field of employment enlarges or the demand for labour augments, your position will inevitably deteriorate:—divines and county magistrates scouted such philosophy, and inculcated upon their hearers "increase and multiply,"—the strength of a country lies in its num-

bers,—“dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.” Lastly, political economy said, Industry, frugality, forethought, and perseverance shall not fail of their reward,—nor indolence, unthrift, and crime escape a bitter and certain retribution; the condition of the former must, under any circumstances, be immeasurably and obviously preferable. But no such thing. Disappointed and discouraged virtue sarcastically points on the one side, to the half-famished labourer and the struggling and squalid artisan; on the other, to the pauper, better fed and more warmly clothed, and his children gratuitously and admirably educated, and to the criminal in a model prison, with his comfortable cell, his warm and cold water, his cocoa, his soup, his Bible, and his bell,—and asks if political economy *has* indeed ruled this anomalous and enigmatic world.

In the second place, one of the chief notions which lie at the root of this vast scheme for associated labour, is precisely the same which dictated the *guilds* in the middle ages,—the desire to proportion the supply of labour to the demand, by previous arrangements. It is a step back into the past. In one of the letters written to explain “what communism is,” which we have placed at the head of this article, Mr. Hunt thus expresses himself:—

“The fundamental principle of all communistic theories and systems—call them by what name you will,—is the principle of *concert in the division of employments*. . . . The principle of communism appears to me to be the complement to the division of employments. The theory is, that if several men combine their labour, and divide the several employments among them, the economy of time, and the acquisition of skill, will increase the amount of produce; and no one will deny that the gross increase of produce must be beneficial to society. Such is the theory; but what do we find to be the fact? The fact is that the gross amount of produce is not proportionably in-

creased; that to many of the dividers of labour it is not increased at all; and that the return of produce for labour is in no respect apportioned to exertion. I find the plain and direct ground of this in *want of concert*. It is plain that if any given number of men combine, and divide employments, they *can* make their labour much more productive, *if* there is some concert between them as to the distribution of their labour; but if there is not that concert, the chances are that some of them will be working in duplicate—producing glut; otherwise working at things not wanted; others doing about the right thing; and a few hitting on something very valuable. And when they come to divide their produce by the principle of trading exchange, a fair share will go to those who have done the right thing, half-a-share a-piece to those who have been working in duplicate, nothing to those who have worked, however honestly, yet uselessly, and an accumulation of several shares to him who has hit upon the most precious something. Precisely a description of our unorganised labour.

“It is presumed that competition increases produce more than concert would. This is a very gross presumption, and I believe a very erroneous one. In the first place, it is quite clear that the greatest amount of produce would be obtained by the best distribution of labour, which cannot possibly be obtained without concert;—secondly, competition draws labour from the least remunerative to the most remunerative; but those which by no means “pay” best, according to the trading exchange, are among those which are most certain and profitable for society; competition, therefore, disturbs the right distribution of labour.”

The whole passage appears to us very characteristic of the school from which it emanates; it presents a fair, and by no means an exaggerated, specimen of that incompleteness and feebleness of the logical faculty, that easy resting in a *half*-understanding, that complacent satisfaction with a partial glimpse, that mixing up of things totally distinct (as the *produce* of labour with the *distribution* of that produce),—which hinder so many excellent philanthropists from arriving at a recognition of their own errors. Stripped of needless verbiage,

Mr. Hunt's idea seems to be this : that labour would be both more productive and better rewarded, were the number of labourers in each department exactly proportioned to the need which the world has of the produce of that department ; were there just the right number of tailors, shoemakers, blacksmiths, carpenters, graziers, and corn-growers ; and were this "just right number" ascertained beforehand. We may grant him his position. But how can this vital point be ascertained beforehand ? How can it be ascertained at all, except by free competition, which will soon bring us the needed knowledge, by showing us which branches of industry are most, and which least, remunerative ; i. e. *which branches of industry have the fewest, and which the most labourers in proportion to the demand for their produce.* If any kind of labour does not pay, this is a sign that it is not wanted, and will be abandoned ; if any one pays ill, this is a proof that there are too many labourers employed in it, or, as Mr. Hunt expresses it, that they are "working in duplicate." Mr. Hunt would ascertain all this, not by experience, but *à priori*, "by concert." Has he ever troubled himself to consider by what machinery this preliminary concert can be managed ? how the requirements of the world for this or that article can be discovered, otherwise than by making it, and seeing if the world will buy it ? Would he have committees—boards of *prud'hommes*—to decide when an additional tailor, or a score of fresh bricklayers are wanted, and to forbid the existence of such till the want is clearly made manifest ? No doubt some dim idea of this sort was in his mind, when he penned the passage we have quoted. But all this has been tried ages since, and is even now in partial operation in many parts of the Continent. This was the basis of the guilds of old. The incorporated tradesmen had a monopoly of their special branch of industry ; they decided how many

apprentices each man should be allowed to educate; how many masters should be admitted yearly into the confraternity: if the demand for coats, or watches, or furniture was slack, they restricted their numbers; if, on the contrary, society required these articles, or any others, in increased quantities, they, after a considerable enhancement of price, graciously permitted a moderate multiplication of the needful handicraftsmen. We presume this is the system which Mr. Hunt would introduce; for between ascertaining the number of labourers required in each department by some method of this kind, or by the results of free competition, we can discern no third alternative. Is he then prepared to take the consequences of such a regulating power? and is he aware that the system was only enabled to work in former days, and could only work now, by such stern restrictions on marriage and multiplication, as the operative classes would fiercely revolt from? And that if they would submit to such restrictions, the competition system would work at least as well as any other?

Concert, then, as an opponent to, or substitute for, competition, in solving the problem of the wisest distribution of labour, is either a chimera or a tyranny. So applied, it delegates to a few men sitting in committee the decision as to the number of workmen required in each department, and the right of warning all others off the ground; while it expects from these men a wisdom and omniscience, which neither individuals nor corporations could by possibility possess. Let us now proceed to examine a little more closely the principle and the organisation of these "Associations of Workmen," which have been recently established to carry out the communistic idea; and let us endeavour to ascertain whether any, and what, fallacies and sources of failure lie hid in their constitution.

In Paris, there are said to be already 150 of these

working societies. Cabinet-makers, jewellers, cooks, bakers, paviours, tailors, watch-makers, have formed themselves into a number of associations, each working in common, trading on their own capital, and dividing their gains among themselves, instead of working for a master. Some of the associations have succeeded, some have failed; some just maintain a precarious and struggling existence. Some are formed on sound principles, some on unsound. Some divide profits equally among all the associates, some divide them in proportion to the earnings. We rejoice to see the spirit, energy, and faithfulness with which many of these experiments are carried out; and we wish them all possible success. In England, similar associations have been formed, and are increasing in number, especially among the tailors, needlewomen, and shoemakers of the metropolis. One of these has acquired considerable celebrity, viz. the "Working Tailors' Association," in Castle Street; and, as this is supposed to have been constructed with the greatest care, and to owe its origin to the most educated and sober portion of the Christian Socialists, we shall select it as our touchstone.

The condition of the working tailors of the metropolis, 23,000 in number, appeared from the descriptions in the "Morning Chronicle," to be so deplorable and so unjust,—owing, as was alleged, to the system of contract work, sweaters or middle-men, and excessive competition,—that a number of benevolent men, with Mr. Maurice and Mr. Kingsley at their head, resolved upon an attempt to rescue them from such wretched degradation, and, if possible, beat out and destroy the slop-sellers. For this purpose they subscribed 300*l.*, rented some suitable premises, and fairly started in business a body of operative tailors, now numbering at least thirty, under the management of a Mr. Walter Cooper, himself a tailor, a chartist, and a person of considerable influ-

ence and ability. "The principles on which the association is conducted, are those of the most moderate form of socialism; that is to say, the association is not communistic, as we have defined the word, but simply co-operative. The manager, Mr. Cooper, who is absolute master until the association shall have repaid the capital advanced to it, receives a salary of 2*l.* a week; the other members work by the piece, according to a fixed tariff of prices. All work is done on the premises. No Sunday labour is allowed. Interest at the rate of four per cent. is paid on the capital lent. One-third of the net profits is by common agreement devoted to the extension of the association, by the admission of new members; the remainder is to be divided among the workmen in the ratio of their earnings, or otherwise applied to their common benefit."

Now, in all this there is nothing to which the purest political economist could object, with the single exception, that the association is trading on borrowed capital; the capital not being attracted to the trade by the expectation of profit, but being artificially directed into a business already overstocked. If, however (as is generally the case in the Parisian associations), this capital had been supplied by the workmen themselves, the association would have presented no vulnerable point of criticism, and every economist would have bid it God speed! But it is evident that here is nothing new; the association is simply a large co-partnership,—such as Mr. Mill, a sound economist, advised,—such as we advocated two years ago*,—such as the "Economist" newspaper (the great bugbear of the communists) advocated many months ago, and was claimed by Mr. Hunt as an unconscious socialist for so doing. In this association, the labourers work *under a directing head*,

* See *supra*, p. 386.

for wages fixed by him, and, as they themselves own the capital, they naturally divide among themselves the capitalist's profit. The "Needlewomen's Association" is formed on the same plan. The superintendent gives out and allots the work, and "*has the power of dismissal*, subject to the ladies' committee, or the lady visitor of the day." The superintendent here, and Mr. Cooper in the other case, represent *the master as superintendent*, and the workmen (as soon, at least, as they have paid their debts) represent *the master as capitalist*; the former, therefore, receives that portion of the master's profit which repays his superintendence, and the latter, that portion which repays his capital. In what way, then, does this arrangement differ from the ordinary relations of capital and labour? Were not many great capitalists labourers to begin with? Are not many great capitalists labourers still, and do not two or more of these labouring capitalists often unite in partnership? Where, then, an association of working men is so constructed as to violate no principle of sound economy, it introduces no new element and no new arrangement,—nothing, therefore, from which any sudden remodelling or renovation of society can be hoped,—nothing which needs to be announced with flourish of trumpets.

It is evident that these two associations contain within them one essential element of success, which is absent in theoretic socialism—*a master's hand*. As long as this is allowed, submitted to, well chosen, and well paid,—*in proportion, that is, as the existing arrangements are approximated to*,—so long the institutions will do well. Only under a master, or manager endowed with adequate authority, can an association composed of many members hold together. This has already been made clear in more than one instance in France. M. Leclaire's experiment has succeeded admirably, because he is absolute and uncontrolled

governor. But in two cases which we know of, a reduction in the number of members was found necessary to save the associations from breaking up. The "Working Jewellers' Association" numbered seventeen members, but was dissolved and re-constituted with only eleven. The watch-makers have been obliged to reduce their numbers to six, and all new members are admitted with great caution and difficulty. A despotic element is necessary when the society is to be large.

The second remark we have to make is this;—that these enterprises, which are announced to us as being, if successful, the solution of the social problem, evade the whole difficulty. *How is it* that the sweating system, with all its alleged cruelties and oppressions, is possible? Why are the slop-sellers able to get the operatives so completely in their power, to — fix their wages, and to dictate terms? Why is it that the journeymen-tailors are so powerless that they must accept any wages that are offered to them? Clearly because they are more numerous than the demand requires. Does Mr. Kingsley suppose, that if the 23,000 tailors in London were to be suddenly reduced to 15,000,—the coats and trousers required by society remaining the same,—the slop-sellers could compel them to work for them if they did not wish, or to work at all, except in localities of their own choosing, and on their own terms? Does he not perceive that, in the event of such an occurrence, it would be the men and not the masters who would dictate terms? Is it not abundantly obvious, that the misery and slavery of the London tailors and needlewomen arise *primarily* from the clothing needs of the metropolis being inadequate to keep so many in full and constant employment? Now, have these associations,—which they are told will rescue them,—the slightest tendency, either to augment the demand for clothes, or to diminish the numbers of the clothing

artisans? If not, how can they effect any purpose, except that of ameliorating the condition of the few who become members of them?

“Oh! but” (they reply) “we purpose in time to organise all the tailors in the metropolis into similar associations.” Very well; follow out your process, and see where it will lead. The fact you have to meet is this;—there are 23,000 tailors in existence, with full and constant work only for 15,000; as you continue your benevolent organisations, you will in the end have associated these 15,000, and secured to them a comfortable and continuous subsistence. *What will then have become of the residual 8000?* Will you cast them out to starve? Will you support them by a charitable contribution from the earnings of the employed? Do you suppose they will not compete with you, and rather than earn nothing, work at lower wages than you assign yourselves? Do you not perceive, that the utmost your organisation of labour can save for distribution among the mass of artisans, *is the profits of the middlemen*, which you conceive to be so enormous,—nay, only the difference between these profits and the salary you pay to your various managers and superintendents, who stand to you in the place of the middlemen? and have you taken the trouble to ask yourselves these simple questions before you announced your scheme as a great panacea—an infallible way to salvation?

“But the great merit of these associations is, that they will extinguish competition, and the reduction of wages to which it leads.” Will they indeed do this? Have they the slightest tendency to do it? Do they even contemplate doing it? True, it is the great object which Mr. Kingsley, Mr. Maurice, Mr. Walter Cooper, and Mr. Hunt propose to themselves in the promotion of them; but let us see if it be kept in view; let us inquire whether competition—“that selfish system

which lies at the root of all the evils under which English industry now suffers"—be not the very life and essence of them all. It is curious to observe how the denounced principle peeps out everywhere. In the first place, we read in the account of Parisian associations by Mr. Ludlow, another eminent socialist, ("Frazer's Magazine,")—"The cooks, who unfortunately are *divided into several rival associations* (one of which has lately failed), can afford to give the working classes as good a breakfast *at four sous as they can obtain elsewhere for ten.*—(Competition and under-selling this, surely?)—The paviours, who have two associations, have got into their hands *by tender*—(competition and *contract-work* again!)—a large portion of the paving of Paris." In Mr. Kingsley's pamphlet, "Cheap Clothes and Nasty," which is filled with tirades against competition as "cannibalism" and "devil-worship,"—after saying, in the name of the tailors, "it is competition that is ruining us, every man for himself, every man against his brother;—the remedy must be in association, co-operation, self-sacrifice for the sake of one another:"—he proceeds, "We will hoard our profits, and not spend them *till we have squeezed out all the sweaters one by one.* Then we will open our common shop, *and sell at as low a price as the cheapest of the show shops;* and then all that the master slop-sellers had better do will be, simply to vanish and become extinct." Again, "Let us help and foster the growth of these associations. Let us encourage the journeymen *to compete* with Nebuchadnezzar and Co. *at their own game,* . . . and let the association swallow up all associations similar to itself, which might end in competing with it."—"A Working Tailors' Association is actually formed in London, ready *to wage internecine war* with Nebuchadnezzar and Co." &c. &c. Do not these passages from the most eloquent denouncer of

competition themselves breathe the very spirit of the most bitter and unrelenting competition?

It must be evident, beyond dispute, to any one endowed with the most moderate amount of the ratiocinative faculty, that where there are more people anxious to do the work, than there is work to be done, they will compete with one another to obtain this work. If all the tailors in London were embodied to-morrow into a number of different associations, it is certain that these associations would compete with one another, exactly as individuals would do, because there would be too many associations (to the supposed extent of 8000 men) for the work required. "True," replies Mr. Kingsley, "but our work will be incomplete till we have blended all these associations into one vast guild. Competition will then be out of the question." Yes! but it will be replaced by *monopoly*; and we all know what monopoly means—artificial prices, a restricted market, a gigantic job, a final and inevitable smash. To sum up the whole: the advocates of association as a cure for competition are caught between two horns of a dilemma, which half Mr. Kingsley's sagacity, if united with a less vivid fancy and a less copious vocabulary, would, from the first, have enabled him to foresee;—in case you have many associations, you retain all the evils of competition; in case you merge them all into one, you encounter all the evils of monopoly. We defy the Socialists to escape from this dilemma, except by assuming a remodelling of human nature by divine or Christian influences; and *when this remodelling has been achieved, all systems will become indifferent, for the evils of all systems will be wiped away.*

One of the most indefensible parts of Mr. Kingsley's writings is his incessant denunciations of *cheapness*, when arising,—as nearly all cheapness, directly or indirectly, does, and has always done,—from the ope-

ration of the competitive element. It is true that in this he is merely following the unthinking multitude, echoing the reckless language of the noisy and venal press, and making himself the mouthpiece of class selfishness, popular prejudice, and ignorant passion. But this is an unworthy position for a man of his intellect and education. How could any Christian minister, a thinker, a gentleman, and a scholar, permit himself to pour forth such rant as this?

“Let no man enter them (the cheap shdw-shops)—they are temples of Moloch—their thresholds are rank with human blood. God’s curse is on them, and on those who, by supporting them, are partakers of their sins. Above all, let no clergyman deal at them.

“Poverty—and many clergymen are poor—doubly poor, because society requires them often to keep up the dress of a gentleman on the income of an artisan, because too the demands on their charity are quadruple those of any other class—yet poverty is no excuse. The thing is damnable—not Christianity only, but common humanity cry out against it. Woe to those who dare to outrage in private the principles which they preach in public! God is not mocked; and his curse will find out the priest at the altar, as well as the nobleman in his castle.

“But it is so hard to deprive the public of the luxury of cheap clothes! Then let the public look out for some other means of procuring that priceless blessing. If that, on experiment be found impossible—if the comfort of the few be for ever to be bought by the misery of the many—if civilisation *is to benefit every one except the producing class*—then this world is truly the devil’s world and the sooner so ill-constructed and infernal a machine is destroyed by that personage, the better.”

We wonder whether Mr. Kingsley was an advocate for cheap corn? or whether, in the old days of corn laws and agricultural protection, he took the side of *the producing class*? If the latter, he was at least consistent. But while penning this precious passage, did it never occur to him that cheapness means abundance,

and that if cheap and abundant food be a blessing, cheap and abundant clothing must be a blessing likewise? Did that first prolific fact, which lies at the root of all free trade and sound political economy, never flash across his mind—that the producer of one thing is the consumer of another?—that every “producing class” benefits by the cheapness of every article turned out by every other class?—that every class naturally desires that, while the article *it* produces should be dear, the article *every one else* produces should be cheap? Does he not perceive that this is the very rampant incarnation of selfishness? and that of this selfishness he has blindly made himself the organ and the pandar? The distressed tailor wishes that clothes should be dear, but that shoes and corn should be cheap; that competition should be excluded from *his* trade, but allowed to work its natural consequence in every other. The produce of one class in the community is exchanged against the produce of another. If all “producing classes” are to be protected, and cheapness is to be eschewed and denounced in all alike—well and good! The only result will be a general rise in the price of *all* articles, and no one will be better off than before; and Mr. Kingsley, when he wrote the inconsiderate passage we have quoted, ought, in common honesty, to have informed his *protégés* that the first effect of his doctrine, if fairly carried out, would be to make them pay double for their quartern loaf.

Moreover, who are the parties who most signally benefit by this much-abused cheapness? Clearly the poor of all classes—those whose clothes, shoes, and food, absorb the largest proportion of their income. Has Mr. Kingsley ever reflected, how many thousands are by this very cheapness enabled to afford themselves a new coat or a new shirt, who must otherwise have

gone without it?—and how many thousands of tailors and needlewomen find employment in consequence of the enlargement of demand for their labour arising out of this very cheapness? Does he not perceive that, if coats were double the price, only half the number could be sold?—and is he unable to estimate the privation both to producer and consumer, which this implies? The truth is, that the sufferings of the needlewomen and tailors have so powerfully impressed his imagination, that he is prepared to relieve them by trampling upon every other class, and by discarding every restraining rule of wisdom or of justice. “To press forward to a great principle,” said Lord Stowell, “by breaking through every other principle that stands in the way of its accomplishment, is as little consonant with private morality as with public justice.” “Men,” says the author of “The Statesman,” “who are scrupulously conscientious in all other things will often be not at all so in their kindnesses. Such men, from motives of compassion, charity, and good will, have sometimes given birth to results which the slightest exercise of common sense might have taught them to foresee; and which, if foreseen, would have alarmed the conscience of a buccaneer.”

One of the chief hardships of which the needlewomen complain—one of the principal causes to which, we are told, they ascribe their deplorable condition—is the competition of individuals who are not *wholly* dependent on their labour for support; who, having a small but inadequate income, take in needlework at their own homes; and, employing in it their spare time, can afford to do it for lower remuneration than those who must derive from it their entire support. They demand to be protected against the competition of these parties, either by law or by various arrangements, such as requiring all work to be done on the premises of the

employer. Neither they nor their supporters in the press seem to be conscious either of the tyranny of this demand or of the selfishness which dictates it;—for, who are these competitors against whom they protest, and whom they would wish thus summarily to extinguish? In a great proportion of cases they are decayed and struggling gentlewomen—the widows and daughters of clergymen and military officers—who, unfit, from health, habits, and education, for more laborious occupations, seek in plain or fine needlework the means of eking out a scanty and difficult subsistence. They have, perhaps, savings or a pension which yields them 20*l.* or 40*l.* a year, on which to maintain hungry children or aged parents, who have known all the comforts and luxuries of refined existence. It would be needless barbarity and degradation to compel them to work in a shop, and for longer hours than their strength could endure; and it is such meritorious strugglers as these whom regular tailors and needlewomen are proposing to deprive of employment. That *they*, seeing, as is natural, only their own side of the case, should be anxious to commit such cruelty is pardonable enough; but that writers and reasoners, capable of a wider view, should encourage them in their injustice, is far less excusable. They might surely see, that to carry out this policy fairly and completely, would require an enactment,—*that no person shall work who can by possibility subsist, however miserably, without work*, lest he should interfere with some one else. Those who ask us to remedy one injustice by another, or to prevent suffering by crime, we may feel perfectly certain, without any lengthened train of reasoning, are guiding us on a wrong tack. There can be no question, that needlework is too often wretchedly paid. But why is this? Simply because it is the easiest of all work; because it presents this

point of attraction—that it *can* be done at home, in private houses, and at odd hours; because, for one woman who can do anything else, there are ten who can sew and bind;—for many of the reasons, in short, which explain why hand-loom weaving is ill paid. It is an irrepealable and a righteous law, that the easiest departments of labour will always be the worst remunerated; because their very easiness will tempt superabundant numbers into them. When the remuneration becomes so inadequate as to counterbalance the temptations of facility, this superabundance will diminish, and labourers will seek other lines. If, however, *all* departments should be overstocked, then—without a diminution of numbers, or an enlargement of the field of labour—no restrictions, no cobbling, no re-distribution of employments, can meet the evil. It is on this account that we look with sadness and mistrust upon these new schemes for making society over again, as upon all old ones—upon the recent and modified forms of communism, as upon all its previous and clumsier phases. They are all plans, not for meeting, but for evading the difficulty—not for solving, but for shirking the problem—not for untying, but for cutting the entangled knot. To show this at length, would be merely to go over again Mr. Mill's admirable chapters “on popular remedies for low wages.” The benevolent men and women who are setting on foot these associations of tailors, needlewomen, shoemakers, and bakers, are merely aiding them to augment the produce of their several branches of industry, without augmenting the demand for this produce and the fund for the payment of it; and can, therefore, confer no genuine or comprehensive benefit upon them. Observe, we do not in the least object to these associations; we do not even object to the proceedings of those excellent and compassionate individuals who sug-

gest and assist in their formation; we blame them only for announcing these schemes as great discoveries and mighty engines for the rescue and redemption of society. Promulgated in such a spirit, they can end only in bitter disappointment. Still we shall rejoice to see them spread whenever their rules do not contain any self-destroying fallacy; for though they will not meet and cure our great social malady, they will raise, comfort, and instruct the individual workmen. To recommend them as doing more than this is mischievous, because it is holding out expectations from them which can never be realised, and teaching the labouring classes to look for emancipation in a wrong quarter, and to lean upon a broken reed.

To sum up the whole:—Communitic Association, as opposed to Competition, can only—as indeed its more enlightened preachers fully admit—succeed in its object, when society shall be Christianised in reality, as well as in name; when all men shall be sufficiently purified from selfishness to work with equal zeal for the common good as for individual reward, and to wish for nothing more than a just and equal portion of the property of the common wealth. When this point is achieved, the existing arrangements of capital and labour would answer as well as any other; for then every master would exact from his labourers as little toil, and pay them as large remuneration, as possibility would permit. *As man now is*,—active, selfish, and ambitious, loving his family better than his neighbours, and his neighbours better than that abstract entity called the community,—associations, where they differ from practicable partnerships, must be either lost in the whirlpool of competition, or wrecked on the rock of monopoly. Start the most theoretically perfect scheme of communism you can devise; gradually eliminate from it every element which makes it work ill;

add to it, as experience suggests, every element required to make it work well; and you will arrive either at the existing arrangements of capital and labour, or at such co-partnership systems as sound political economists have long since recommended. Distribution of employments by preliminary concert, no practicable machinery could effect; competition, if allowed to operate unchecked, will speedily effect a wiser, juster, more productive, more expansive and adaptable distribution of them, than any government, guild, or committee which the wit of man could contrive.

“Alton Locke” professes to be the autobiography of a journeyman tailor, self-educated, a poet, and a chartist, who emancipates himself from the shackles of domestic Calvinism; publishes a volume of poems; falls in love with a lady of higher rank; becomes an agitator; gets himself involved in an agricultural riot, and is imprisoned in consequence; is concerned, in spite of his better judgment, in the chartist conspiracies of 1848; loses his health; is rescued and converted by a benevolent lady; and finally dies on a voyage to Texas. The plot is to the last degree improbable and inartistic; and the characters, with one admirable exception which deserves to live, hastily sketched, crude, and inconsistent. We have journeymen tailors who correct Latin proofs for Cambridge undergraduates, and scatter about the technical terms of scholastic logic; working chartists, who quote Ariosto; and high-born ladies, who enter into sentimental conversation with unknown and ill-dressed strangers at the Dulwich Gallery; — with other equally unlikely occurrences. Considered as a novel or a professed literary work of art, “Alton Locke” lies open to severe criticism. But it would be hardly fair to regard it in this light. It is written with a philanthropic purpose, and is a series of descriptions of the most pain-

ful and harrowing scenes which life can present among the poor; a gallery of pictures of early homes made miserable by the most unflinching Calvinism; of tailors' workshops, close, fetid, and crowded; of courts and alleys filthy and pestilential past imagination, and we should hope past fact also; of sweaters' dens where incautious workmen are imprisoned till they become mere skeletons; of starving peasants meeting upon wintry downs and pouring forth descriptions of the dreariest wretchedness; of conspirators' rooms filled with frantic Irishmen and watched by government spies—all drawn with vast graphic power, and portrayed in colours such as only a genuine poet could command. The work abounds in passages of wild, unchastened eloquence; and, amid much aimless declamation and not a little language which Christian feeling and scholarly taste must alike condemn, it breathes through every page a profound and passionate sympathy with the sufferings of the poor. To us the purity of this sympathy is alloyed and its effect injured, by the bitter, indiscriminate, and unsparing indignation which is poured out upon the rich, the government, and the clergy.

We have not space for any detailed analysis of the work, nor for many extracts even of those parts which we most admire. One passage, however, we will present to our readers, both on account of the fearful truth of the pictures it contains, and also as introducing Sandy Mackaye, the shrewd, excellent, pure-hearted old Scotchman, the redeeming character of the book. The young poet had commenced his essays by a description of the South Sea Islands, and Mackaye tells him to choose his subject from the poetry that lies around him:—

“ ‘What the deevil! is there no barlotry and idolatry here in England, that ye maun gang speering after it in the Cannibal Islands? Are ye gaun to be like they puir aristocratic bodies, that wad suner hear an Italian dog howl, than an English nightingale sing?’

“ ‘Coral islands? Pacific? What do ye ken about Pacifics? Are ye a cockney or a Cannibal Islander? Dinna stand there, ye gowk, as fusionless as a docken, but tell me that. Where do ye live?’ ”

“ ‘What do ye mean, Mr. Mackaye!’ asked I, with a doleful and disappointed visage.

“ ‘Mean—why, if God had meant ye to write about Pacifics, He’d ha put ye there—and because He means ye to write about London town, He’s put ye there—and gien ye an unco sharp taste o’ the ways o’t; and I’ll gie ye anither. Come along wi’ me.’ And he seized me by the arm, and hardly giving me time to put on my hat, marched me out into the streets, and away through Clare Market to St. Giles’s.

“It was a foul, chilly, foggy, Saturday night. From the butchers’ and greengrocers’ shops the gas lights flared and flickered, wild and ghastly, over haggard groups of slip-shod dirty women, bargaining for scraps of stale meat and frost-bitten vegetables, wrangling about short weight and bad quality. Fish stalls and fruit stalls lined the edge of the greasy pavement, sending up odours as foul as the language of the sellers and buyers. Blood and sewer water crawled from under doors and out of spouts, and reeked down the gutters among offal, animal and vegetable, in every stage of putrefaction. Foul vapours rose from cow-sheds and slaughter-houses, and the doorways of undrained alleys, where the inhabitants carried the filth out on their shoes from the back yard into the court, and from the court into the main street; while above, hanging like cliffs over the streets—those narrow brawling torrents of filth, and poverty, and sin—the houses with their teeming load of life were piled up into the dingy choking night. A ghastly, deafening, sickening sight it was. Go, scented Belgravian! and see what London is; and then go to the library which God has given thee—one often fears in vain—and see what science says this London might be!

“He stopped suddenly before the entrance of a miserable alley.

“ ‘Look!—there’s not a soul down that yard but’s either beggar, drunkard, thief, or worse. Write about that! Say how ye saw the mouth o’ hell, and the twa pillars thereof at the entry—the pawnbroker’s shop o’ one side and the gin palace at the

other—twa monstrous deevils, eating up men, women, and bairns, body and soul. Are na they a mair damnable man-devouring idol than ony red-hot statue o' Moloch, or wicker Gogmagog, wherein auld Britons burnt their prisoners? Look at thae bare-footed, bare-backed hizzies, with their arms roun' the men's necks, and their mouths full o' vitriol and beastly words! Look at that Irishwoman pouring the gin down the babbie's throat! Look at that raff o' a boy gaun out o' the pawnshop, where he's been pledging the handkerchief he stole the morning, into the gin shop, to buy beer poisoned wi' grains o' paradise, and cocculus indicus, and saut, and a' damnable, maddening, thirst-breeding, lust-breeding drugs! Look at that girl that went in wi' a shawl to her back and cam' out wi'out ane! Drunkards frae the breast!—harlots frae the cradle!—damned before they're born! John Calvin had an inkling of the truth there, I'm a'most driven to think, wi' his reprobation deevil's doctrines!'

“ ‘ Well—but—Mr. Mackaye,—I know nothing about these poor creatures.’ ”

“ ‘ Then ye ought. What do ye ken about the Pacific? Which is maist to your business?—thae bare-backed hizzies that play the harlot o' the other side o' the warld, or these—these thousands o' bare-backed hizzies that play the harlot o' your ain side—made out o' your ain flesh and blude? You a poet? True poetry, like true charity, my laddie, begins at hame. If ye'll be a poet at a', ye maun be a cockney poet, and while the cockneys be what they be, ye maun write, like Jeremiah of old, o' lamentation and mourning and wae, for the sins o' your people. Gin ye want to learn the spirit o' a people's poet, down wi' your Bible and read thae auld Hebrew prophets; gin ye would learn the style, read your Burns frae morning till night; and gin ye'd learn the matter, just gang after your nose, and keep your eyes open, and ye'll no miss it.’ ”

“ ‘ But all this is so—so unpoetical.’ ”

“ ‘ Hech! Is there no the heeven above them there, and the hell beneath them, and God frowning, and the deevil grinning? No poetry there! Is no the verra idea of the classic tragedy defined to be, man conquered by circumstance? Canna ye see it there? And the verra idea of the modern tragedy, man conquering circumstance?—and I'll show ye that, too—in

mony a garret where no eye but the gude God's enters, to see the patience, and the fortitude, and the self-sacrifice, and the luve stronger than death, that's shining in thae dark places o' the earth. Come wi' me, and see.' ”

We must add one more extract, for the sake of the valuable lesson to clergymen which it contains. The writer is in prison, and the chaplain is endeavouring to convert him from his errors with the usual weapons that such men employ:—

“ Then he deluged me with tracts, weak and well-meaning, which informed me that ‘ Christians,’ being ‘ not of this world,’ had nothing to do with politics; and preached to me the divine right of kings, passive obedience to the powers—or impotences—that be, &c. &c., with such success as may be imagined. I opened them each, read a few sentences, and laid them by. They were written by good men, no doubt; but men who had an interest in keeping up the present system; at all events, by men who knew nothing of my temptations, my creed, my unbelief; who saw all heaven and earth from a station antipodal to my own: I had simply nothing to do with them.

“ The good man laboured under the delusion, common enough, of choosing his favourite weapons from his weakest faculty; and the very inferiority of his intellect prevented him from seeing where his true strength lay. He *would* argue; he would try to convert me from scepticism, by, what seemed to him reasoning, the common figure of which was, what logicians, I believe, call begging the question; and the common method, what they call *ignoratio elenchi*—shooting at pigeons, while crows are the game desired. He always started by demanding my assent to the very question which lay at the bottom of my doubts. He would wrangle and wrestle blindly up and down, with tears of earnestness in his eyes, till he had lost his temper, as far as was possible for one so angel-guarded as he seemed to be; and then, when he found himself confused, contradicting his own words, making concessions at which he shuddered, for the sake of gaining from me assent to propositions which he found out the next moment I understood in quite a different sense from his, he would suddenly shift his ground, and

try to knock me down authoritatively with a single text of Scripture; when all the while I wanted proof that Scripture had any authority at all. . . .

“ Besides, I never denied the existence of Jesus of Nazareth, or his apostles. I doubted the myths and doctrines which I believed to have been gradually built up round the true story. The fact was, he was, like most of his class, attacking extinct Satans, fighting manfully against Voltaire, Volney, and Tom Paine; while I was fighting for Strauss, Hennell, and Emerson. And at last he gave me up for some weeks as a hopeless infidel, without ever having touched the points on which I disbelieved. He had never read Strauss—hardly even heard of him; and till clergymen make up their minds to do that, and to answer Strauss also, they will, as he did, leave the heretic artisan just where they found him.”

The counts of our indictment against “ Alton Locke ” are threefold. In the first place we object on principle to stories written with the purpose of illustrating an opinion or establishing a doctrine. We consider this an illegitimate use of fiction. Fiction may be rightfully employed to impress upon the public mind an acknowledged truth, or to revise and recall a forgotten one, — never to prove a disputed one. Its appropriate aims are the delineation of life, the exhibition and analysis of character, the portraiture of passion, the description of nature. Polemics, whether religious, political, or metaphysical, lie wholly beyond its province. The soundness of this literary canon will be obvious if we reflect that the novelist *makes his facts* as well as his reasonings. He *coins* the premises from which his conclusions are deduced; and he may coin exactly what he wants. It would be equally easy to write a tale to illustrate the evils of the Corn Laws, or the evils of their repeal. The artisan, famishing for want of food or for want of employment caused by a restrictive policy, would furnish the fundamental fact of the first case; the peasant famishing from want of occupation consequent upon the

impoverishment of the farmers, and upon the land being thrown out of cultivation, would supply the basis of the second; and on such foundations a skilful artist might raise a superstructure which would horrify the free-trader on the one side and the protectionist on the other. Nay, the controversial writer of fiction need not actually *make* his facts; he needs only to *select* them. An incomplete and partial picture will answer his purpose just as well as a false one — far better, indeed. A skilful grouping of materials, ignoring or throwing into the background whatever might either mar the harmony of the picture or induce a suspicion of its fidelity to nature, — a careful tracing back of facts to their supposed causes and their intended effects, — would enable him triumphantly to defend almost any thesis, and establish in the minds of his readers almost any creed.

Now, “Alton Locke” is written with the obvious intention to deprecate competition as the source of most of the evils of English society, and to recommend Christian Socialism as their cure. For this purpose the story is constructed; to this, much of the copious declamation it contains is directed. On the fallacy which lies hid at the bottom of these views, we have already said enough; and we therefore pass over several tirades against competition and “cannibalism,” which we had marked for extraction and reproof.

But apart from these errors, “Alton Locke” is pervaded by another, which we have already had occasion, in former articles, to condemn. There is all the old staple of demagogism: the neglect of the poor by the rich; the indifference of the higher classes; the dereliction of duty by the government; the contrast between the fat sheep or well-groomed cart-horse, and the ill-fed and ill-lodged labourer; the irritating averment, that “society has denied them their rights,” — so welcome to clever, but poverty-stricken and struggling artisans.

There is the usual jumble between the fourteenth century and the nineteenth; the desire to recall the time when the poor were at once the serfs and the *protégés* of the rich, and to amalgamate it with the days of chartism, when the poor assert their equality, and insist upon their freedom.* It is not thus that irritations can be allayed, or miseries removed, or wrongs redressed. The working classes and their advocates must decide on which of the two positions they will take their stand: whether they will be cared for as dependents and inferiors? or whether, by wisdom, self-control, frugality, and toil, they will fight their independent way to dignity and well-being,—whether they will step back to a stationary and degraded past, or strive onward to the assertion of their free humanity? But it is not given to them, any more than to other classes, to combine inconsistent advantages: they cannot unite the safety of being in leading-strings with the liberty of being without them; the right of acting for themselves, with the right to be saved from the consequences of their actions; they must not whine because the higher classes do not aid them, and refuse to let these classes direct them; they must not insist on the duty of government to provide for them, and deny the authority of govern-

* Proudhon, with the sagacity his writings so often show, has well exposed this inconsistency. “Les socialistes ont confondu deux choses essentiellement distinctes, lorsque, opposant l’union du foyer domestique à la concurrence industrielle, ils se sont demandé si la société ne pouvait être constituée précisément comme une grande famille, dont tous les membres seraient liés par l’affection du sang, et non comme une espèce de coalition où chacun est retenu par la loi de ses intérêts. La famille n’est pas le type, la molécule organique de la société. La famille est le type et le berceau de la monarchie et du patriciat: en elle réside et se conserve l’idée d’autorité et de souveraineté, qui s’efface de plus en plus dans l’état. C’est sur le modèle de la famille que toutes les sociétés antiques et féodales s’étaient organisées, et c’est précisément contre cette vieille constitution patriarcale que proteste et se revolte la démocratie moderne.”

ment to control them ; they must not denounce *laissez-faire*, and denounce a paternal despotism likewise.

We are little disposed to extenuate the negligences of our rulers, or the short-comings of our aristocracy. Both have much to undo, and much to make amends for in the past ; and both, we think, have shown an earnest resolution to atone for their sins of omission and commission, as far as sins can ever be atoned for. All, however, that can now be done, is to remove every legal obstacle in the way of the improvement of the condition of the people, to facilitate and encourage every effort which they make in a right direction, and to promote their education as far as religious prejudices and passions will allow. All this government is now doing with a single purpose and a zealous will ; and none who remember what the functions and what the powers of government in a free country are, will expect them to do more than the public are willing to let them do. Those are no true friends of the working classes—though they may think themselves such, and wish to be such—who would induce them to rely on external aid, for objects which must be achieved by themselves, if they are to be achieved at all, and to seek their emancipation in a change of circumstances and social arrangements, rather than in a change of character and conduct. Our sympathy with popular suffering, is as prompt and ready as that of any of the speculators who show it in so strange a way. But we would manifest it by steadily discountenancing any attempt to get out of their troubles in the worst, because it happens to be the shortest, way, and to build their better fortunes on a treacherous quicksand, instead of on solid ground. We, too, have our visions of the future of the working classes ; and they are as bright and hopeful as any socialist could indulge in. But we seek their realisation, not in a recurrence to mediæval errors, not in repeating the abor-

tive experiments of unenlightened times, but in steady adherence to those principles of moral and economic science, whose truth is confirmed alike by every instance of conformity, and every instance of disobedience; we would prepare the advent of the days we dream of, not by upsetting, but by developing, the natural arrangements of society, — not by doing violence to the strongest and truest instincts of our nature, but by strictly conforming to their highest manifestations, — not by surrounding man with artificial environments which shall make subsistence certain, enterprise superfluous, and virtue easy, low-pitched, and monotonous, but by calling forth and cultivating those inborn capacities and noble energies, which can subdue and mould external circumstances, can conquer casualties and command results, — qualities, by the exercise of which a social paradise might be regained, in default of which, such a paradise, if bestowed, would soon be forfeited and lost.

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PROGRESS AND HOPES OF SOCIALISM.*

THE complicated interests and wants of society; the conflict between our desires and our capacities, our aspirations and the circumstances which repress them and hedge them in; the prodigious and unforeseen start which industry has taken in modern days; the rapid development of those powers and talents which bear upon material civilisation, contrasted with the slower elaboration of the wisdom which should guide them, and the virtues which should hallow and pervade them; the energetic operation of that passion of self-interest which is given to be the motive impulse of our course, unchecked and unchastened by those loftier sympathetic principles which were meant to be its counteracting and modifying influence, — have combined to produce social evils and anomalies which, as they are brought to light either by the researches of the benevolent or the outcries of the suffering, give rise to a ceaseless succession of schemes for their mitigation or removal. Perhaps none of them are new; perhaps every one of them has in turn been propounded and exposed, tried and abandoned by preceding generations; but it is certain that, since the vast demolition of everything ancient, venerable, and established, which was effected by the first French Revolution, these projects have been renewed time after time with a degree of pertinacity, a prolific fertility, a dogged and impetuous enthusiasm, to which no previous age offers a parallel. At the present moment, and in our own country, some of them are now revived with

* From the "Economist."

such judicious modifications, and by men of such unquestionable ability and purity of purpose; and they are so aided by the knowledge of social evils, which is more general than it ever was before, and by the Christian benevolence of the age, which is more earnest and indefatigable than it ever was before — that they well deserve an attentive and candid examination.

Of these schemes for setting society right, those comprehended under the general but undefined name of "Socialism," seem endowed with the most indestructible vitality. We shall not attempt to do what their advocates have never been able to agree among themselves in doing, viz.: to define either the meaning of the word, or the common element embodied in all the forms which Socialism has assumed. It has as many shapes as Proteus, and as many colours as the chameleon. It is one thing in the hands of St. Simon, and another in the pages of Fourier; Owen gives it a third form, Thornton Hunt a fourth, Mr. Kingsley and his friends a fifth. It would be impossible to chase it through these various disguises; nor would our time be profitably spent in doing so: it is only when it descends from the domain of theory, and assumes a concrete form and an actual existence, that we, as practical economists and political philosophers, are concerned with it. Socialism, as we used to hear of it in England, was connected with atheistical opinions, with Mr. Owen's name, and with many wild doctrines and projects which needed no formal refutation. Socialism, in France, is commonly conceived of as a creed held by the lowest and most violent of the political parties which distract that unhappy land — the *extreme gauche* of the Republicans. In neither of these phases are we at present concerned with it; in neither of these do we think it likely to have a permanent existence, a formidable influence, or a rapid spread; and in both it is connected

able and damaging ingredients which, as wholly foreign to and separable from its

land and France the fundamental which we take to be that of a fra- for industrial purposes, a work- amon good, in place of the and capitalists, employers upon by intelligent and thropic schemers, and an Associations for which sympathy and aid, as containing the great problem of social life, and rich for the rehabilitation of the working classes the restoration of the community to a healthy and happy condition. These associations are of two kinds : — "*Working Associations*," in which a number of operatives or handicraftsmen possessing some capital, either their own or borrowed, agree to work together as a company and for themselves, instead of working for a master; and "*Co-operative Stores*," in which a number combine to keep a shop of their own, in which they are both purchasers, and vendors, in place of buying from the usual shopkeepers. In England these societies are in their infancy; and have been, for the most part, started under the superintendence and by the fostering care of a body of gentlemen who denominate themselves Christian Socialists, and whose Christianity will be respected even by those who most doubt their wisdom and condemn their economic views. In France, the associations were almost all formed and sustained by the men themselves; and have, we believe, been generally conducted with a zeal, perseverance, fairness, and mutual forbearance which assuredly deserves, and must command, a great measure of success. In Paris alone, these bodies are said to be 197 in number, of which bakers

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with disreputable and damaging ingredients which, as we believe, are wholly foreign to and separable from its essence.

But both in England and France the fundamental idea of Socialism — which we take to be that of a fraternal union among men for industrial purposes, a working in common for the common good, in place of the usual arrangement of labourers and capitalists, employers and employed — has been seized upon by intelligent and ambitious operatives, and by philanthropic schemers, and made the foundation of certain Associations for which they now claim public sympathy and aid, as containing the solution of the great problem of social life, and rich in promise for the rehabilitation of the working classes and the restoration of the community to a healthy and happy condition. These associations are of two kinds: — “*Working Associations*,” in which a number of operatives or handicraftsmen possessing some capital, either their own or borrowed, agree to work together as a company and for themselves, instead of working for a master; and “*Co-operative Stores*,” in which a number combine to keep a shop of their own, in which they are both purchasers, and vendors, in place of buying from the usual shopkeepers. In England these societies are in their infancy; and have been, for the most part, started under the superintendence and by the fostering care of a body of gentlemen who denominate themselves Christian Socialists, and whose Christianity will be respected even by those who most doubt their wisdom and condemn their economic views. In France, the associations were almost all formed and sustained by the men themselves; and have, we believe, been generally conducted with a zeal, perseverance, fairness, and mutual forbearance which assuredly deserves, and must command, a great measure of success. In Paris alone, these bodies are said to be 197 in number, of which bakers

and hatters furnish 6 each, hairdressers 34, and cooks 47. Some of these are recent; others have been established for some years;—some are flourishing; others are struggling for a bare subsistence; but all, we believe, are very sanguine as to ultimate success. The “Working Associations” in London are nine in number; of which two are tailors, two builders, one needlewomen, one printers, one pianoforte makers, one shoemakers, and one bakers. There are a few others in the provinces, principally in Lancashire; where are also several “Co-operative Stores.”

Let us now inquire what these associations do, how they work, what they propose to themselves, and how far their hopes are likely, or possible, to be realised. We will not pause over the various mistakes made by several of them at their first outset, or the difficulties, frequently fatal ones, which they encountered either from want of caution or defect of legal protection;—we will speak of those only which have at length taken root in the soundest principles, and which are conducted by the ablest men. The Working Tailors’ Association in Castle Street may, we believe, be taken as a fair sample. It has an able man at its head; it was the first established; has been subjected to an unusual amount of criticism; has eliminated, we understand, some of the errors of its original constitution; and may be assumed to have paid back (or to be in a sure way of doing so) the loan with which it originally started, so as to be now working on its own capital. There are, or were shortly ago, thirty-four members and a manager. There is a committee of management, but the details of arrangement are conducted by the manager, who assigns to each man his work; fixed weekly wages are paid according to capacity or desert, and profits are divided among the workmen according to their earnings. (This arrangement varies in different associations, but to this

they will all ultimately come, as it is obviously the only equitable arrangement). New members are admitted by ballot, and must be "probationers" for a year before they are ballotted for; and great care is exercised, or assumed to be, in selecting the probationers.

Now, in all this there is nothing that the strictest political economist can object to. Here you have a number of men, dissatisfied with the ordinary industrial arrangements of society—the separation of capitalist and labourer—and who agree to unite the two functions; to combine their small savings, and become their own employers; to form a partnership among themselves *as capitalists* for the purpose of giving work to themselves *as labourers*; and thus to monopolise *in their single persons, but in their double capacity*, the profits of the master and the wages of the journeyman. As capitalists, they have of course a perfect right to lend their money to the partnership instead of putting it in the savings banks or in sick clubs; as workmen they have a perfect right to prefer working for the partnership to working for an individual employer. No man can gainsay them. Both their object and their means are quite legitimate and very honourable. We wish them all success. All seems fair. They pay interest for the capital employed; they pay wages for the work done; and they divide profits, as partners should, in proportion to the degree in which each member has contributed to make those profits.

But there will arise practical difficulties which, though many among them must at least dimly foresee, we do not think that those who anticipate such splendid success and rapid spread for these associations, can have adequately weighed. These difficulties will multiply according to the number of associates, according to the length of time they may exist, according to the severity of the "bad times" they may have to encounter.

As they proceed they will find, we fear, that their harmonious and prosperous existence will depend upon a fairness, a forbearance, a self-abnegating submission, a humbleness or at least a clear-sightedness and justice in the estimation of their own respective merits, a patience under privation,—in a word, a degree of mental and moral development, which—though not perhaps rarer among the working classes than among other ranks—is rare everywhere, and can scarcely be reasonably expected to be *predominant* among numerous bodies. How long will each workman be content with the kind and nature of the work allotted to him, without accusing the manager of favouritism? How long will the tailor who “conceits” himself to be a good cutter-out, be satisfied with the dissenting judgment of the manager who delegates him to the work and the wages of a sewer? How long will the man who imagines himself to be clean, industrious, and accurate, submit to the decision of those who decide that he is slovenly, idle, and careless? How long will he bear to pay fines which he will not admit to have incurred, and to receive lower remuneration than his fellow-workmen whom he deems to be no abler than himself? It is no longer a monarchy, like ordinary establishments, but a republic, where his vote is as good as any other man’s. He will league himself with other associates like himself who are discontented with what probably is a perfectly fair allotment, will intrigue against the manager, will agitate for an alteration of the rules, and if he can collect a considerable minority, will be a source of endless torment and intestine discord. Or if he is a superior workman, who could command first-rate remuneration elsewhere, will he continue satisfied to remain associated with a number of men whose comparative idleness and incapacity sadly diminish the potential profits of the concern, and perhaps bring dis-

credit upon the articles it produces? Will he submit to suffer for their faults, which yet, being in a minority, he cannot control nor escape from? And how long will those who *work with their hands* be willing to pay to those who *work with their head*, and whose labour it is not therefore easy for them to appreciate or appraise, a sufficient remuneration to secure the skill, integrity, and firmness indispensable to command success? Already, as we learn from several quarters, and as Mr. Coningham in his recent lecture at Brighton admitted, this difficulty has been severely felt. And when those periods arrive, which must come in all trades, when work is slack and wages low, is it probable that the members of a numerous association will have sufficient good sense and forbearance to submit to inevitable privation, or sufficient intelligence to believe that it *is* inevitable? Will they abstain from seeking work elsewhere during their unemployed hours? Will they abstain from reproaching their manager with mismanagement and incapacity? Will they meet cheerfully what must be met?

But we will suppose that, either by great skill in admitting only members whose wisdom and virtue are as exceptional as the demands which will be made upon them by such contingencies as we have named,—or by such wise rules and legal power of enforcing them, as may put down discontent, and provide a summary decision for all disputes,—these difficulties are all surmounted, and the associations have struggled through to a permanent existence;—it still remains to inquire, how far their hopes will be realised, and what probability there is that the expectations held out to their members can escape disappointment. For what are the anticipations with which they enter on these projects? They assume, that in the existing division of gains between capital and labour, the former secures a most

unjust and inordinate share of the remuneration. They affirm also, that the number of middlemen is needlessly large, and their profits scandalously disproportioned to their services. And they propose to themselves, by the new arrangement, to do away with both middleman and capitalist, and to appropriate among themselves the present remuneration of the two functionaries. It is clear that there is here an important hiatus in their premises. Even if we assume that the profits of the co-operative partnership are equal in the long run to those of an establishment of equal size conducted by an individual capitalist,—that the interest each workman takes in the success of the concern, will counterbalance the zeal, watchfulness, devotion, and single despotism of a skilful, intelligent, and wealthy tradesman,—and that the workmen will consent to pay such a salary to their chief, as will command a necessary amount of talent, integrity, and diligence,—still it is obvious, that all which the co-operative associates could hope to grasp would be—not the *entire* profits of the middleman and capitalist—not even the net profits after deducting the interest of money—but simply *the difference between such net profits and those salaries which they must, and do, themselves pay to those functionaries who, in their establishment, represent the capitalist and middleman—i. e., the manager and foreman.* These functionaries may be fewer in their establishment, and may possibly be worse paid; but it is reckoning without their host to imagine that they can dispense with them altogether. Moses and Son are reproached with letting out their work to middlemen;—it is alleged, and we dare say truly, that many of these middlemen, by fair or unfair means, make enormous gains;—but if a co-operative association were to carry on business on the same scale as Moses and Son, how many foremen, putters-out, and distributors of work must they employ? And what

would these distributors be, but middlemen to all intents and purposes, with this sole difference,—that they would be middlemen working on a salary, instead of on their own account? In the present case, Moses and Son say to the middlemen:—"Mr. Jones, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Stokes, here are 500 waistcoats each; give them out to good workmen, and let me have them back on Thursday." In the other case, Mr. Cooper, the manager, would say to his foremen:—"Mr. Edwards, Mr. Williams, Mr. Sykes, here are 500 waistcoats; distribute them to the proper men, and collect them again on Thursday." Mr. Cooper would probably have to employ at least as many foremen, as Messrs. Moses employs middlemen, though at much lower earnings; and the *difference* between the earnings of the two sets of functionaries, would be all that the co-operative workmen could save and share of the now be-grudged profits of the middlemen. Again, if the individual capitalist, after paying interest of money, puts into his pocket, annually and on an average of years, a larger sum, *as profit*, than the co-operative association would have to pay to their manager (or *gérant*), *as salary*, in order to obtain a man of equal knowledge, skill, vigilance, integrity, and zeal,—then the *difference* between these two sums would be all that the association could appropriate of the now envied accumulations of the capitalist. If the workmen have entered these societies with any expectation of higher economic advantages than these, that expectation is doomed to certain disappointment.

Now, our firm conviction is that, in an average of cases, and on an average of years, the profits of the capitalist (above interest) will be found to be no more than a fair and moderate remuneration for those qualities and that attention which are required equally from the manager of a co-operative association, and must,

therefore, be remunerated equally; so that the whole pecuniary gain would be limited to the before-mentioned difference between the earnings of foremen and middlemen. We shall be told that the earnings of these middlemen are swelled by the extortion of scandalous gains upon food advanced, and unjust fines for alleged bad or unpunctual work. This is no doubt in many cases true; but, in the *first* place, it is not to be supposed that fines, or their equivalent, will not have to be levied in case of careless or slovenly co-operative workmen;—in the *second* place, these fines, where unjust, form a portion of the allowed-for earnings of the middlemen;—and, in the *third* place, the possibility of these alleged iniquitous extortions arises from the men being placed in the power of their oppressors, either owing to their redundant numbers, or their imprudence and recklessness—evils which, as we shall presently see, the establishment of the co-operative system will leave untouched.

The case of “Co-operative Stores” is precisely analogous. Here the aim of the associates is to secure to themselves the profit of the capitalist, who is a small tradesman or shopkeeper—a perfectly legitimate object, if they are themselves capitalists. There can be no reason why fifty operatives, who have saved 10*l.* each, should not set up a draper’s or a grocer’s shop, just as well as two small tradesmen who have 250*l.* each. But if they imagine that they can, by so doing, secure to themselves any greater pecuniary advantage than the *difference* between the profits for which the two small tradesmen are willing to work, and the salary which they, the co-operatives, must pay to their foreman or managing clerk; or if they imagine that they can command such foreman, endowed with the honesty, skill, and vigilance needed to insure the prosperity of their concern, for remuneration materially lower than

that which the individual tradesman allots to himself in the form of profit,—they are preparing for themselves a certain, bitter, and easily to be foreseen disenchantment. We do not say that collateral, moral, and educational benefits may not arise in the case of both working associations and co-operative stores, for the sake of which it might be well even to encounter some pecuniary loss;—but we do say, that the possible pecuniary gain is limited in the manner we have specified.

Having thus endeavoured to distinguish between the reasonable and unreasonable expectations of the “Christian Socialists,” and to assign the limits of possible pecuniary advantage which might result to the promoters of “Working Associations” and “Co-operative Stores,” we will now endeavour to ascertain what grain of truth may lie hid in those wide, and more brilliant, visions in which these philanthropists indulge; and what prospect there is, in sober reality, that society can be restored, or its deeper sufferings materially alleviated, by the general adoption of their plans.

For the Christian Socialists do not, by any means, confine their projects to securing the establishment and success of a certain number of associations of working men, who shall be labourers and capitalists in one:—they propose to multiply these associations, till they embrace the whole field of each separate department of industry, and to extend these co-operative stores till they have extinguished all individual shopkeepers in the several branches of retail trade. Even then, their work will be only half accomplished: they will then proceed to complete and crown their undertaking, by uniting all the associations in each trade into one vast *guild*, governed by a central committee; and, finally, by effecting a union of all these guilds into one gigantic fraternal combination, whose affairs shall be directed by

delegates from all the guilds. By this means, the whole of the industrial arrangements of society will be revolutionised; and the noble, Christian, and pacific principle of concert and co-operation, will be substituted for the selfish, mischievous, and wicked one of competition.

Competition, they affirm, is the great devil of the modern system of industry and commerce,—the Satan of our complicated civilisation,—the root to which all our aggravated sufferings may be traced. Competition gluts our markets; competition drives down prices below a remunerating point; competition lowers wages beyond the limits of subsistence; competition enables the rich to take advantage of the necessities of the poor; competition makes each man snatch the bread out of his neighbour's mouth, converts a nation of brethren into a mass of hostile and isolated units, and finally involves capitalist and labourer in one common ruin. Now we will pass over for the present the inquiry how far this is an exaggerated statement of one side of the question, and an entire and unfair ignoring of the other, and we will simply consider the mode in which the Socialists propose to meet and abolish this devouring mischief.

Their first plan is the one so strongly eulogised in the Christian Scriptures,—casting out Satan by Satan's agency. They propose to beat out Moses and Son and all other rivals by every art which the most resolute and indefatigable spirit of competition can supply. They will not rest, they say, till they have driven every slop-seller and "competitive" employer from the trade. With this hallowed aim—so sacred in their hands, so iniquitous in everybody else's—they put in operation all the usual means of success. They promise to make articles at least as good or better, and to sell them at least as cheap or cheaper, than any other establishment. They advertise as vigorously, in proportion to their

funds. They profess as largely, and describe as glowingly. They *tout* for custom with at least equal zeal. They and their supporters canvass among their friends, and entreat them to leave tradesmen who have served them long and well, in order to encourage these new associations. We know this to be the case. We do not blame them for it: if they promise no more than they perform, and are guilty of no untrue or unfair representations, and no malicious depreciation of their rivals, their exertions are perfectly legitimate. But if legitimate in them, they must be equally legitimate in others whom yet they denounce for using them.

We will imagine them successful. We will imagine that in each trade numerous associations of working men have been formed, and that, by the effects of superior diligence, honesty, and skill—by superior *cheapness* in a word (the very word which is the object of such fierce denunciations from their most eloquent writers!)—they have driven every individual capitalist and employer from the arena. Or, to make the matter clearer, we will suppose all this to have been effected in a single trade—the tailors. Do they imagine that they have, by this process, either diminished the number of workmen, or increased the aggregate amount of work to be done? Nay, will not the tendency of their success have been to multiply the workmen by improving their condition, and consequently the inducements to enter into it? And if they have neither increased the work nor diminished the workmen, have they lessened by one iota that fact which lies at the root of all competition, and which must render competition as lasting as itself—viz., the insufficiency of work for all the workmen who are seeking it? Do they imagine that the associations will not compete with one another for that full employment which is unattainable by all?—compete, in the first instance, by promising superior punctuality,

neatness, and skill?—compete, in the end, by offering their goods at a lower price? Do they imagine that the man who has ten children and a sick wife will be content with that half-work which may satisfy his bachelor associate, if, by offering himself at lower wages, or his productions at a lower price, he can obtain full work? If they do imagine all this, they count upon the existence of qualities which have yet to be developed. They count upon the predominance of sentiments which are now vanquished, latent, or in abeyance. They count upon the love of the community being stronger than the love of the family, and the love of one's neighbour being stronger than the love of oneself—which it never has been, as a rule, or among numbers, except in transient moments of aroused enthusiasm. They count, in fact, upon a change in the relative strength of human feelings and propensities,—upon a remodelling of human nature (which is a very different thing from its gradual improvement—a faith which we hold as firmly as themselves):—They are, therefore, soaring out of the region of experience into the domain of fancy,—whither we do not care to follow them, because there speculation becomes both unprofitable and delusive.

Again. Do they imagine that these associations will be composed, on an average, of men of equal degrees of capacity and cleverness? and that the association composed of skilful and energetic workmen will not, as a matter of course and of necessity, compete with and beat out the association composed of workmen who may in comparison be termed slothful and slovenly? Do they believe that these latter will not then, inevitably and as a matter of self-defence, lower their prices to counterbalance the inferior quality of their goods, and work longer to make amends for working slower? Moreover, what will become of those hands who, at the original formation of the associations, were found to be redun-

dant,—for whom no work was left when the associations were all adequately employed,—and who are consequently left floating on the surface of the trade, and must either be maintained in idleness, or will form themselves into supernumerary associations to drag down the others, or will work for individual capitalists at low wages, so as to defeat their schemes? They cannot suppose that these men will be content, out of tender regard for the general good, to be extinguished or ignored. They cannot pretend to deny their existence, for it is out of the very fact of this surplus of hands that all the evils of the actual competition spring. If there were no such surplus, the masters would compete for the men, instead of the men competing for the masters; and the workmen would long since have sprung into power and independence. There is no *answer* to all this; but a mitigating plea will be put in, which, as we wish to leave no gap unstopped, we must not pass over without notice. We shall be told and have been told, that by the introduction of the associated system, the condition of the tailors would be so improved, and the wages actually received by them so much enhanced, that they would themselves become *customers* to themselves to a far greater degree than at present, and that thus the demand for clothes (and the work, therefore, to be done) would be increased. Granted:—if they succeed and work well; which possibly they may. But granted to this extent only;—that this increase in the earnings (and therefore in the purchasing power) of the operative tailors can in no case exceed, as we explained fully in our last Paper, the *difference* between the gains of the middleman and capitalist after deducting interest of money, and the salaries of those parties who, under the associative system, would have to perform the functions of the middleman and the capitalist;—a difference which, as

we then showed, must amount to a much smaller sum than it is generally loosely taken at.

But all our representations are met in face by the assertion:—"This competition between the associations, which you suppose inevitable, we shall preclude from ever taking place. For our work will be only half done till we have united them all in one grand federal union, imbued with the true feeling of fraternity, and managed by delegates and chiefs fairly elected from the whole body. This central guild or governing body will decide upon the principle on which the work shall be divided among the different affiliated associations, will fix the amount to be done or the hours to be worked by each, according to the briskness or slackness of demand, the expansion or contraction of the market; so that the aggregate of employment shall be equitably apportioned among all. In this way all disputes and all competition will be avoided."

This sounds plausible enough on paper: let us test it. Whence is to arise that wide knowledge, that delicate barometrical tact, which is to ascertain the amount of production required by thirty millions of people, and the manner in which this is to be allotted among the various associations into which the 100,000 tailors of Great Britain are divided? Where could be found the skill needed even to apportion it fairly and satisfactorily among the 23,000 journeymen of the metropolis alone? What chance is there that the allotments would be sufficiently wise and fair (even where guided by the best intentions) to content the several hundred or thousand allottees? How would it be possible to get so cumbrous a machinery to work? If the plan of fixing from time to time the hours of work were adopted,—as for the sake of simplicity and practicability would probably ultimately be the case,—how would this operate in different localities? The hours which were found

more than ample to enable the London tailors to meet the London demand, might and probably would be quite insufficient to enable the Lancashire tailors to meet the Lancashire demand. The London men would then be for employing their over hours in helping to supply the Lancashire demand; while the Lancashire men would be for working longer hours; and their disputes would be endless and pertinacious. Does any man in his senses, who knows what committees and boards of direction are, really believe that the regulation of supply to meet demand throughout a great country and an important trade, could ever be satisfactorily, permanently, or decently adjusted by a vestry or jury of *Prud'hommes*? Or that the clumsy machinery which was sufficient to guide and govern industry (in a fashion) during the middle ages, when population was scanty, and trade was in its infancy, would be practicable or adequate in these days of gigantic enterprise and complicated interests? How could such a board decide upon the question which would arise every year, as to how many new hands should be admitted into the cotton manufacture or the shoe trade? How allay the indignation and heart-burnings of those whose sons were refused admission and condemned to idleness? Truly the undertaking of such a government would be overwhelming, and the helmsman should be omniscient as well as omnipotent.

Then how are the regulations of this central committee to be enforced upon refractory and reluctant associations? *How to be enforced against those*—an ever-increasing number, if our population goes on multiplying as it has done—*who belong to no association*, because they had found entrance into none,—the central authority deciding that they were not wanted; or because, exercising the unquestionable rights of freemen, they declined belonging to any? Have the Chris-

tian Socialists faced the idea of the shameless and tremendous despotism they will have to conjure up in order to ensure the working of their scheme? Against the affiliated association, indeed, the law might fairly step in (if it were found physically possible) to compel them to adhere to their agreement, and submit to the decisions of the power they had themselves enthroned. But how are they to deal with those independent workmen who, either from rejection or from choice, have remained free and unassociated? Are they to be condemned to inaction and starvation? Are they to be prohibited from competing with the association? Are they to be forbidden to work except for a certain number of hours and at a prescribed rate of wages? Is the individual capitalist to be prevented from employing them on any terms which he and they—both of them free adults and British citizens—may mutually agree upon? If not—if they are to be free to work how they like, as long as they like, for whom they like, and at what remuneration they like, then all your boasted extinction of competition is at an end; the very basis of your scheme for revolutionising the existing arrangements of capital and labour crumbles in the dust; the essence of your panacea for regenerating society evaporates in air; and the golden age is as far removed as ever. If, on the other hand, these floating, isolated, unattached freemen are to be debarred from the first element, the alphabetic claim, of liberty—viz., the right to sell their own labour on their own terms and to a customer of their own choice; if the associated guilds are to be endowed with power to crush all outlying rivals and competitors, or to compel them to a forced and loathed incorporation—then you are not only casting out Satan by Satan's agency, but you are bringing seven worse devils than the old one into the chamber you have swept and garnished for your mad experiment; you are renovating and healing

society by the instrumentality of its deadliest malady and its most gnawing curse; you are summoning tyranny to do the work of justice; you are rashly calling in the worst foe to civilisation and to progress, to aid you in your glorious aims of indefinite improvement and universal emancipation; you are asking spirits from hell to do the work of angels from heaven,—and they laugh in scornful amazement at your blind temerity and your wilful and headlong self-delusion.

But we will imagine even this difficulty got over. We will conceive that—by the influence of some all-persuasive eloquence unknown to the real world, by some millennial change in human nature which would leave you nothing to desire or accomplish, or by some such all-powerful and all-embracing despotism as an earthly paradise would be dearly purchased by enthroning—competition is crushed, extinguished, or absorbed; and that all workmen in each department of industry work in concert and under the control and direction of a common head; that all the tailors, all the shoemakers, all the bakers, &c., form each one colossal establishment; and that all rivalry is thus precluded. The matter is settled as far as the workmen are concerned: *how is it with regard to the public?* The *producers* are provided for: *how will it fare with the consumers?* They have no longer any security, or any protection; society has escaped one peril, to rush upon another; it has exchanged open competition for one huge monopoly; it has foregone the solid cheapness secured by the candour of striving rivals, for such precarious substitute for cheapness as may be charitably assigned to it by the caprice of a body emancipated from all control, because from all competition;—the tailors, the shoemakers, the bakers, will charge whatever they please for their coats, their shoes, and their bread—and no man can gainsay

them. The price may be high, the quantity scanty, and the quality bad; but the public has no remedy save in an appeal to the justice, the mercy, or the decency of the dispensing potentates. But this is not all: the evil will proceed with the accelerated and proverbially rapid pace of all retrogressive movements; as the price rises, the demand will fall off; as demand falls off, work will become scantier; the tailors making fewer clothes, will require less cloth: the occupation of the manufacturer diminishes; the shoemaker—to speak in the language of barter—will give the baker fewer shoes for his loaf; the baker will give the tailor fewer loaves for his coat; and throughout the community the rivalry of dearness will be substituted for the rivalry of cheapness; and the competition of trades for the competition of individuals.

“Wrong again, oh Prophet of Evil!” say the Christian Socialists; “our work is not yet completed; you must not seize upon it in its unfinished state, and then inveigh against its imperfection. Our task will only be wholly done, when we have united, not only all workmen of one trade, *but all trades* into one gigantic association, governed by the same unselfish and fraternal principles which prevail in each separate guild. We shall provide one federal assembly for the whole community of interests, which shall prevent the mischief of monopoly, as the minor councils prevented the evils of competition, by fixing the rate of exchange between each department of industry; deciding how many loaves shall be equivalent to so many shoes; how much silk shall be given in exchange for so much cotton; how many hours’ labour of the peasant, the artisan, the statesman, and the student shall be equivalent to a coat, a house, a shoulder of mutton, or a bottle of wine; for since all trade is barter, fixing such a price on each article as shall secure the public from the extortions of monopoly, would be fixing all these things.”

Here we pause: we have brought the Socialists, step by step, to their last great panacea. We have put, fairly, into plain language the schemes and resources, the real nature of which they have disguised to their readers (and we believe to themselves) by vague and misty declamations. We have worked out their processes more clearly and more fully than they are in the habit of working them out for themselves. We have shown the course in which they are moving, the nature of the undertaking in which they have embarked, and the measures which they will be driven, and perhaps dimly expect to be driven, to adopt, — so as to preclude the possibility of any further self-deception which is not wilful. We have brought them to the alternative between failure on the one hand, and an appalling despotism on the other, at which our instincts shrink back in horror; between all the evils of a crushing monopoly, or a colossal board for governing and deciding everything, the very faintest conception of whose functions makes imagination sink under their frightful magnitude and multiplied impossibilities. The bare statement of this ultimate resource is the death-warrant of the whole scheme which leads to it, ends in it, relies upon it. If there be any one who really believes such a huge board of rule feasible, or desirable if feasible, we bow before him; we have no arguments that can reach him; to us he is as invincible as the British army at Waterloo, which, Napoleon said, did not know when it was beaten. We are content to have brought our antagonists to unmask the real plan and ultimate means, — conceiving that the refutation of these lies in their simple announcement.

ALISON'S HISTORY OF EUROPE.*

WE have long wished to introduce this work to the knowledge of our readers, and ought, we confess, to have done so long ago. But the vast extent of the subject, the deep interest of the period, and the extraordinary magnitude of the matters treated of, have hitherto deterred us from making the attempt;—while at the same time the singular admixture of serious faults which call for severe criticism, with great merits which excite our warmest admiration, renders our task one of unusual perplexity. These considerations must be our excuse, both with Mr. Alison and with our readers, for having suffered so long a period to elapse before noticing a work which, with all its defects, is one of the ablest and most fascinating that, for many years, has fallen into our hands.

Mr. Alison seems to have been fully impressed with the importance of the task which he has undertaken, and with the responsibility attached to its performance in a diligent, honest, and impartial spirit. He first conceived the idea of such a work, on witnessing the meeting of the allied sovereigns in Paris in 1814, after the fall of their great rival; and he has devoted nearly the whole of his leisure since that period to the collection of materials for his history, to the collation of conflicting authorities, and to a personal inspection of most of the scenes illustrated by the great events of the

* From the "Westminster Review."

History of Europe, from the Commencement of the French Revolution to the Restoration of the Bourbons. By ARCHIBALD ALISON. Blackwood and Sons.

twenty-five years whose annalist he had resolved to become. The result of this patient and conscientious diligence is seen in the production of a work distinguished for fulness, general accuracy, and graphic power, and an impartiality the more remarkable, as the author is a man of outrageous political prejudices, which, though they disfigure almost every chapter of his book, have never been allowed to cast a shade over the honourable fairness of the narrative. In all his descriptions, both of civil and military proceedings, Mr. Alison is particularly successful; and we would instance his account of the campaign of Aspern and Wagram, and his masterly view of the measures adopted by Napoleon for the reorganisation of France from 1799 to 1804, as admirable specimens of his excellence in this line of historical writing.

These eminent merits are, however, materially dashed by qualities of a very opposite character, which greatly diminish both the pleasure and the instruction Mr. Alison's history would otherwise have been calculated to afford. The first and slightest of these is a wonderful verbosity, which, together with his incessant repetitions, has greatly contributed to swell out his book to its present unwieldly bulk; and to this we may add a carelessness of style often amounting to absolute obscurity. But we have been chiefly disappointed to perceive a deficiency of that comprehensive grasp of mind, those powers of close reasoning, and that penetrating search into the hidden causes of great events, without which no historian can hope to live, and which no period of history more imperatively requires than the one which Mr. Alison has selected. His reflections, which are very lengthy and somewhat obtrusive, are not unfrequently trite, shallow, and declamatory, often marked by the blindest party prejudice, and delivered at the same time in a tone of dogmatism, which only

the profoundest wisdom can render tolerable, but which profound wisdom never assumes.

The work embraces a period of twenty-five years, from the first outbreak of the French Revolution to the final termination of the wars arising out of it in 1815. It is comprised in ten volumes of excessive thickness, which, by a greater condensation of style, and the omission of all idle declamation and needless repetitions, will one day, we trust, be reduced to six. We do not, however, find fault with the minute detail in which Mr. Alison has thought it wise to write the history of this period. Historical summaries and abridgments are, of all works, the most useless and the most dull. If the past is to be of any service, either to guide us in the present or to prognosticate the future—if it is to give us any insight into the causes which bring about national prosperity or suffering—if it is to throw any light on the motives of human action, or the deep intricacies of human character—it must be written with the fullest and minutest particularity. Otherwise it is of little more value than a column of names and dates.

There are, however, but few periods of history that merit to be thus studied in detail. In modern times, probably the only passages that would repay such minute investigation are—the era of maritime discovery, at the close of the fifteenth and the early part of the sixteenth century; the Reformation; the rise and fall of the Italian republics; the struggle for constitutional liberty in England in the seventeenth century; and finally, the great rebellion against feudal and mental oppression in France, which broke forth publicly in 1789. Of all these, the last is to us far the most interesting, as nearest to our own days, as most remarkable in its character, and most far spreading in its consequences.

We know of no period of history so fertile in attrac-

tions, both to writer and to reader; none which presents so many scenes of fearful and thrilling interest to be described; so many profound and subtle problems of character to be solved; so many intricate intrigues to be unravelled; so many prolific truths of political philosophy to be deduced; so many lessons of deep and melancholy wisdom to be learned. We know of no period so rich in materials, alike for the statesman, the moralist, and the poet, nor one which, to treat aright, would require so rare a combination of the intellectual gifts of all three. At the same time we know of no period, for an accurate and philosophical history of which such ample materials exist. Yet such a work is still a desideratum—a desideratum which Mignet, Thiers, Carlyle, and Alison, have been alike unable to supply.

The period over which Mr. Alison's work extends naturally divides itself into two sections—the history of the Revolution and the history of Napoleon—the respective treatment of which required very different qualifications. In the latter Mr. Alison has been so eminently successful, we think, as not only to supersede the necessity for any future history, but to earn a very distinguished place in the first rank of modern historians. In the former division we are disposed to think that he has failed, and failed from the want of that patient thought and philosophic grasp of mind which this portion of history pre-eminently demands.

The progress of the human mind and of human society is seldom marked by regular and successive steps. At some periods civilisation appears to be stationary; at others, even to retrograde; at others, again, to spring forward with rapid, gigantic, and almost convulsive strides. This irregularity of advance is, doubtless, more apparent than actual. Preparations are gradually made, ideas progressively matured, and the foundations of the future superstructure laid with

secret and patient industry. But these subterranean workings are for the most part unnoticed, till in the fulness of time a rich harvest of consequences is developed, with apparent suddenness, from causes which have been accumulating in silence for many generations.

The French Revolution was one of the most remarkable of these *harvest-times* of society. The stride forward was sudden, immense, and spasmodic; but the seeds of this vast event had long been germinating in the secret places of the earth. It is impossible, within our brief limits, to enter into any philosophical analysis of the nature, the causes, and the ultimate results, of this great political convulsion, or even to pass the strictures we should wish to do on the singularly imperfect and unsatisfactory manner in which Mr. Alison has executed this part of his task. A few general remarks are all that we can venture to offer.

A philosophical view of this period would comprise *four* distinct considerations:—the causes which led to the revolution; the causes which gave to it its peculiar character; the causes which led to its immediate and complete failure; and the permanent results of good and evil which have survived it.

The *proximate* causes of the revolution—the disputes with the parliament—the profusion of the court—the dilapidation of the finances, which made the summoning of the States-General a necessary, though a desperate expedient—Mr. Alison has narrated with sufficient clearness. Nay, he has enumerated, in all their enormity, a host of oppressions enough to have driven even wise men mad, yet in his view evidently quite inadequate either to explain the popular excitement or to justify the subsequent retaliation; for he throughout speaks of the French people as acting under the influence of some mysterious and wholly inexplicable frenzy. His description of the tyranny of the old

régime is such as to impress us with the feeling that while it would have been infamy to submit to it, scarcely any punishment would be too heavy for its crimes, and scarcely any price too great to pay for emancipation from its grasp; yet he everywhere describes the national rising against so insupportable a yoke, as almost an unprovoked, and quite an unpardonable iniquity. In fact, notwithstanding all his researches, he has failed sufficiently to recognise the great feature of the revolution, viz.: that it was *a rebellion against class-legislation**; that the privileges of the aristocracy had become too grievous to be borne; while the profligacy of the court, and the vicious lives and supine negligence of the clergy, had dissipated that loyal and pious spirit which alone could oppose a barrier to the passionate excesses of a triumphant and exasperated populace. In one word, the revolution was a struggle between MAN and NOBLE-MAN.

The distinction between noble and plebeian was carried in France to a degree of which it is difficult in a free country to form an adequate conception; and the privileges of high birth descended to all the children, instead of being confined, as in England, to the eldest son. The consequence was the establishment of a line

* His forgetfulness of this fact is the more remarkable, as he himself admits it fully and states it broadly in his introductory chapters (vol. i. p. 109.):—

“The extraordinary character of the French Revolution arose, not from any peculiarities in the disposition of the people, or any faults exclusively owing to the government, but from the weight of the despotism which had preceded, and the magnitude of the changes which were to follow it. . . . France would have done less at the revolution, if she had done more before it; she would not so unmercifully have unsheathed the sword to govern, if she had not so long been governed by the sword; she would not have fallen for years under the guillotine of the populace, if she had not groaned for centuries under the fetters of the nobility.”

of demarcation, which neither talent, enterprise, nor success was able to pass. "On the one side," says Mr. Alison, "were 150,000 privileged individuals; on the other the whole body of the French people. All situations of importance in the church, the army, the court, the bench, or diplomacy, were exclusively enjoyed by the former of these classes."

Surely a system of such transcendent egotism as to admit of this description—a system which excluded from all offices of power, honour, or emolument, the talent, the energy, the industry of the nation; and which, in a population of thirty millions, reserved all the loaves and fishes of the state for 150,000 favourites of fortune, called imperatively for total reconstruction, and might well explain and excuse any amount of exasperation in the disfranchised and oppressed majority. It was this system which enlisted the wealthy, the able, and the educated portion of the *middle* classes on the revolutionary side.

The great mass of the people, including the peasantry in the country and the labouring classes in the towns, had their own intolerable grievances to secure their sympathy and co-operation in the same direction. These grievances Mr. Alison has described without any attempt to conceal or palliate their enormity. The privileged orders possessed two-thirds of the land, and yet were exempted from a large proportion of the taxes. The *vingtième* and the *taille* (the latter of which was levied solely on the *tiers état*) were burdens on the produce of the soil, of so oppressive a character, that Arthur Young calculates that they, together with the rent, amounted to *eleven-twelfths* of the whole produce, or as he states it, that supposing the yield of an acre to be worth 3*l.* 2*s.* 7*d.*, 1*l.* 18*s.* 4*d.* of this went to the king, and 18*s.* to the landlord, leaving only 6*s.* 3*d.* for the cultivator. Mr. Alison quotes this, and proceeds:—

“The great proprietors all resorted to Paris in quest of amusement, dissipation, or advancement; and with the exception of La Vendée, where a totally different system of manners prevailed, the country was hardly ever visited by its landlords. The natural consequence of this was, that no kindly feelings, no common interest, united the landlord and his tenantry. The former regarded the cultivators in no other light than as beasts of burden, from whose labour the greatest possible profit was to be extracted; the latter considered their lords as tyrants, known only by the vexatious visits and endless demands of their bailiffs.”

Nor was this all.

“The local burdens and legal services due by the tenantry to their feudal superiors were to the last degree vexatious and oppressive. . . . Game of the most destructive kind, such as wild boars and herds of deer, were permitted to go at large through extensive districts, without any enclosures to protect the crops. The damage they did to the farmers in four parishes only was estimated at 8000*l.* a year. Numerous edicts existed which prohibited hoeing and weeding, lest the young partridges should be disturbed; taking away the stubble, lest the birds should be deprived of shelter; mowing hay, lest their eggs should be destroyed; manuring with night-soil, lest their flavour should be injured. Complaints for the infraction of these edicts were all carried before the manorial courts, where every species of oppression, chicanery, and fraud, were prevalent. . . . The people were bound to grind their corn at their landlord's mill, to press their grapes at his press, to bake their bread at his oven. *Corvées*, or obligations to repair the roads, founded on custom, decrees, and servitude, were enforced with the utmost severity.”—Vol. i. p. 137.

Will it be credited that, after enumerating all these unbearable oppressions, Mr. Alison still seems to think them insufficient to account for the outbreak which took place? and adds (p. 148.)—

“The circumstances which have now been mentioned, without doubt contributed to the formation of that discontent which formed the predisposing cause of the revolution. But the

existing cause, as physicians would say, the immediate source of the convulsion, was the *spirit of innovation* which, like a malady, overspread France at that crisis."

We should like to know what nation possessing the smallest spark of intelligence and courage, and suffering under such enormous wrongs, would not be overspread with a "spirit of innovation."

But the picture would be incomplete without a reference to the general corruption of manners which prevailed among the higher classes, and especially at court. The instinctive loyalty, the blind and discreditable devotion to the sovereign as such, which had distinguished the French up to the time of Louis XIV., and which had been carried to its height by the splendid undertakings and dignified manners of that consummate actor—"little in everything but the art of simulating greatness"—received a considerable shock from the reverses which darkened his later years, and still more, perhaps, from the childish and cruel fanaticism by which he sought to make tardy atonement for the profligacy of his youth and the desolating ambition of his manhood. The sanctimonious observances which he exacted from his nobles and courtiers caused them at his death to rush into the opposite extreme; and the low debauchery and the contemptible baseness of the two succeeding reigns entirely obliterated what remained of the *prestige* of respect and attachment by which royalty had been formerly surrounded.

The clergy, too, shared in the general corruption and in the general contempt. Their wealth was enormous*; their luxury excessive and ostentatious; and all pre-

* The total revenues of the church derived from tithes reached 130,000,000 francs, of which only 42,000,000 were in the hands of the working clergy: the number of ecclesiastics was 80,000. But, in addition to this revenue, the ecclesiastical body owned nearly *half* the soil of France."—*Alison*, vol. i. p. 182.

tension to superior sanctity or correctness of manners had long since been abandoned. Indeed, many of the highest rank among them were pre-eminent for their licentiousness. The unbounded power they obtained towards the latter end of the reign of Louis XIV., by the entire suppression of dissent, served to complete their worthlessness and to seal their doom. "The Gallican Church, no doubt," says Mr. Hall, "looked upon it as a signal triumph when she prevailed on Louis XIV. to repeal the edict of Nantes, and to suppress the Protestant religion. But what was the consequence? Where, after this period, are we to look for her Fenelons and her Pascals? where for the bright monuments of piety and learning which were the glory of her better days? As for piety, she perceived that she had no occasion for it, when there was no lustre of Christian holiness surrounding her; nor for learning, when she had no longer any opponents to confute or any controversies to maintain. She felt herself at liberty to become as ignorant, as secular, as irreligious as she pleased; and amidst the silence and darkness she had created around her, she drew the curtains, and retired to rest."

Mr. Alison frequently laments, in language of bitter severity, the general infidelity which pervaded all classes in France at the period of the revolutionary outbreak. But he does not state, as in common fairness he ought to have done, how much of the guilt of this lies at the door of the "accredited teachers" of religion, who had banished or put to death all who preached the pure faith of Christ; he does not sufficiently inform us that, not only were the clergy among the very first to set the example of unbelief, but that, in truth, Christianity was ever presented to the people *from their hands* so disguised, disfigured, and degraded, that it became almost a virtue to reject it. No stronger proof can be

given of the shameful extent to which clerical duties had been neglected throughout France, than the description which Mr. Alison gives of the army which invaded Egypt and Syria in 1799 (vol. iii. p. 397.):—
“They not only considered the Christian faith as an entire fabrication, but were for the most part ignorant of its very elements. Lavalette has recorded, that hardly one of them had ever been in a church; and in Palestine they were unacquainted even with the names of the holiest places in sacred history.”

Such, then, were the full and ample causes which led to the great catastrophe of France—the intolerable privileges of the few, the severe and hopeless sufferings of the many, and the scandalous and public profligacy of the court and the clergy—not that blind frenzy which Mr. Alison has so needlessly conjured up as its originating source.

The more peculiar features of the revolution, the low and sanguinary character which it so early assumed, and which ultimately led to its entire failure as a measure of regeneration, are eminently deserving of the study of the historian and the statesman; and the causes to which these are to be traced, are not difficult to discover; but we can here do little more than allude to them in the most cursory manner. Among the principal of them, was unquestionably the severity of the oppression to which all classes had been previously subjected; for the violence of the convulsion will always be proportioned to the magnitude of the burden to be thrown off; and the atrocity of the revenge will generally take its measure and its character from the atrocity of the injury to be atoned for. But, perhaps, the circumstance which more than any other modified the course of events in the revolution, was the *famine* which prevailed at its commencement. Mr. Carlyle is, we believe, the only writer on this period who has assigned

to this fact its due weight. The harvest of 1788 was a very defective one, and the consequent scarcity spread itself over the three following years; for though the ensuing crop was plentiful, the usual channels of industry and commerce had by that time become so completely disorganised, that bread was nowhere to be obtained in sufficient quantity, and the scarcity soon amounted to a famine. In the market-place, the corn-sacks had to be guarded by dragoons, "often more than one dragoon to each sack." The bakers' shops were beset by a famishing populace, who were obliged to stand in a long string, often reaching above a hundred yards, that each might be served in turn. Even when obtained, they complained, probably with truth, that the bread was adulterated with plaster of Paris. Many were reduced to "meal-husks and boiled grass." Finally, an ounce and a half of bread daily was the utmost that could be afforded to each individual, and onions and pulse must fill up the deficiency; nay, during the insurrection at Versailles, a horse, which had been slain in the riot, was eagerly seized upon for food. The effect of all this upon a people of singular excitability, and with whom bread is a staple article of food, may be easily conceived. "Rien," says Mad. de Staël, "ne dispose le peuple au mécontentement comme les craintes sur le subsistence;" and perhaps we may briefly express the peculiar effect of the scarcity on the march of revolutionary events, by saying that it caused the *populace* to intermingle in a struggle which would otherwise have been fought out (with a widely-different result in all likelihood) between the aristocracy and the middle classes—the *tiers état*.* "Parties," says Mr. Carlyle,

* The effect of famine, in throwing the control of events into the hands of the lowest class, was well understood by their leaders, one of whom wrote epigrammatically to a friend—"Tout va bien ici; *le pain manque*."—*Carlyle*, vol. ii. p. 335.

“might have suppressed and smothered one another in the ordinary bloodless parliamentary way, on one condition—that France had at least been able to exist all the while. But the sovereign people has a digestive faculty, and cannot do without bread.” When the great mass of the people are comfortable and contented, despotism may exist with little difficulty; or the government and the middle ranks may fight out their differences in a safe and regulated manner; but when the middle ranks are clamorous for political rights, at the same time that the lowest classes are clamorous for food, the most firmly constituted authorities will rarely be able to resist the united pressure. If kings and privileged orders were wise in their generation, and cunning in their craft, they would feed the people *at any price*.

Another cause of the peculiar character of the French Revolution, is to be found in the entire inexperience of the people and their leaders, both in the legislative and the administrative department of government. The old bureaucracy were speedily displaced, as unworthy of the confidence of reformers, and no one else possessed adequate knowledge to perform their functions. The great majority of the French popular leaders—even the ablest and the best among them—derived their ideas of government from Rousseau and Condorcet, and their notions of public virtue from the extravagant and unreal heroes of Plutarch. With this prevailing ignorance, the consequences could scarcely have been other than they were. The moment a representative system was given to a people exasperated by past wrongs, and unskilled in the exercise of power, the excesses which ensued might have been considered almost unavoidable.

But with every allowance for the operation of these unfortunate conditions, much, no doubt, must be attributed to the singular features of the French character,

to that *mobile* and hasty temperament, that warlike spirit and inordinate passion for military glory, and that deplorable want of moral courage, which have always distinguished it, but which were never so marked or attended with such fatal consequences as during the revolutionary struggle. There is much that is amiable, and much that is admirable, in our French neighbours ; for general cleverness, active enterprise, daring heroism, and patience under the hardships and privations of war, they are, perhaps, unrivalled ; but the quiet enthusiasm which pursues its object, steadily and silently, through neglect and through reproach—the courage to withstand popular clamour—the firmness to resist the contagion of popular emotion—the fortitude to suffer in obscurity and in secret—the devotion to adhere unflinchingly to an obnoxious principle or to a sinking cause—these, unhappily, have at no time formed a portion of the Gallic character.

In this enumeration of the causes which stamped upon the French Revolution those peculiar features which distinguish it from all similar convulsions, we must not forget one of the most powerful of them all—the predominance of Paris over the rest of France. The invariable residence of the monarch in or near the metropolis—and that unworthy passion for court distinctions which pervaded all classes—had for many generations been operating to concentrate all the wealth and talent of the kingdom into one single focus. Provincial usefulness and provincial fame were disregarded and despised. The nobility deserted their chateaux in the country, and left their wretched vassals to the superintendence of a rapacious agent, that they might bask in the sunshine of royal favour. The soldier, whenever it was possible, forsook his duties in the province, to hasten to the head-quarters of patronage and promotion ; and whatever of genius or capacity chanced to arise in any

part of France, hurried at once to the capital, as the only fitting arena for display. Hence Paris became, not only the epitome of France, but its heart—the centre of its vitality; any movement *there* was instantaneously transmitted to the remotest departments, and passively acquiesced in by them; and whoever could obtain the mastery of that volatile and excitable metropolis, found himself at once the despotic governor of France. Hence the quick succession of rulers and constitutions, and the marvellous facility with which each one overthrew its predecessor.

The vices and cruelties of the several governments which successively seized the direction of affairs,—and the consequent disappointment, disgust, and exhaustion of the people,—paved an easy way for the daring usurpation of Napoleon; and amid the comparative repose which ensued under his iron despotism, the nation, wearied of its fruitless struggles after freedom, sank quietly to sleep.

What now remains of permanent result from that great social movement which agitated all Europe towards the close of the last century, and of which the French Revolution may be considered as at once the most violent symptom and the most vivid embodiment? Now that the convulsion has subsided, what are the abiding traces it has left behind? Interesting and momentous questions, to which we can only glance at the reply. France has unquestionably gained much; legal, though imperfect, freedom of the press,—equality of civil rights,—and a representative system, extremely defective beyond dispute, but capable of easy and progressive enlargement. In a word, she has now the means of steadily ameliorating all her institutions, without having recourse to violent or illegal enterprises; and *in this condition is comprised real political liberty*. And no one who compares the second revolution with the first, can

doubt that France has profited immensely by the severe ordeal she has passed.

The gain to the civilised world at large, though less marked, has, we think, been no less real. The essentials of genuine freedom are everywhere better understood; the great principle is everywhere acknowledged as a fundamental and unquestioned truth—that the object of all government is the happiness of the subject many, not the advantage of the ruling few. And if no other lesson had been taught us in the school of affliction and adversity, through which the revolutionary mania made us pass, at least this will have survived: nations will have learned to rebel with less vehement excesses, and rulers to be more measured and moderate in their oppression.

The second portion of Mr. Alison's task, the "History of Napoleon," he has executed in a manner worthy of all praise. The picture he has given us of the character and achievements of this wonderful warrior is complete, vivid, and distinct,—and, as a whole, far superior both in fulness and vigour to any other we have read. The various steps by which Napoleon achieved supreme power—the singular manner in which fortune played into his hands—his hairbreadth escapes from utter ruin at several of the most critical periods of his life—his march from victory to victory, and the peculiar and masterly tactics by which he obtained them all—his admirable measures for the regeneration of a country so thoroughly disorganised as France was when he became its ruler—the gradual turning of the scale against him by the improvement of his enemies' conduct, and the exhaustion of his own resources—his last gallant struggle against overwhelming numbers—his temporary abdication and subsequent miraculous revival—together with the final catastrophe, and the melancholy

close of his chequered and turbulent career—are all depicted with a truth of outline and a richness of colouring, which fix the attention of the reader without an effort, and leave an indelible impression on his memory. Certainly no historian ever had so magnificent a subject, and few have ever done fuller justice to their task.

Napoleon was perhaps the most consummate master of military science the world ever saw. In the original conception of his plan, in his accurate and comprehensive combinations, as well as in his manœuvres in the field, — he carried skill to that point at which it merges into genius. Some, we know, have sought to deny him this praise, and have laboured to prove that his talents as a general were of a very mean order ; elaborate arguments by ensigns and cornets have been published with this view : and we well remember many years ago to have heard an officer who had served under him on many occasions declare that, except in his Italian campaigns, he never showed any remarkable capacity, but accomplished all his subsequent conquests solely by dint of numbers, and by a reckless sacrifice of his troops, from which more considerate or humane generals would have shrunk. But it is impossible to read the details of his campaigns, and the most remarkable of his battles, which Mr. Alison has described, without feeling convinced that all such disparaging arguments as those we refer to, must be regarded much in the same light as the old scholastic disputations, the sophistical paradoxes of Rousseau, or the “ Historic Doubts ” of Archbishop Whately ; namely, as amusing feats of intellectual jugglery, or exercises of aimless ingenuity.

It is perfectly true that Napoleon committed more than one serious mistake in his warlike enterprises ; but this rarely occurred except when long experience of his adversaries had taught him a contempt for their ca-

capacity, which they were just ceasing to deserve; or when political considerations mixed themselves with those of strategy, and the conflicting interest of his double position as an emperor and a general, rendered that advisable as a matter of policy, which was in opposition to the acknowledged principles of the military art, as was frequently the case in the later part of his career. Moreover, the general who, for fifteen years, has found a particular line of tactics invariably successful, cannot be accused of blundering because, from some unforeseen change of character on the part of his antagonist, it for once fails of its effect.

It is equally indisputable that, on several occasions, both in his civil and military career, Napoleon narrowly escaped destruction; and that some of his most signal and important triumphs were, if we may so express it, little more than defeats changed into victories by some remarkable stroke of fortune, or by the incapacity or folly of his adversaries. When he seized the supreme power on the 18th Brumaire, it was for many minutes doubtful whether his bold attempt would not terminate in utter failure, and be promptly expiated on the scaffold. The crisis was so fearful, and the danger so imminent, that, for the first and only time in his life, he entirely lost his presence of mind, and was only saved by the timely bombast of his brother Lucien, and the intervention of his own grenadiers. Again, at the battle of Marengo, the second crisis of his life, he was entirely defeated, when the defeat was changed into a splendid victory by the memorable charge of Kellerman. If the allies had remained firm, and refused to treat, after the battle of Austerlitz, it seems clear that Napoleon would have been compelled to exchange a brilliant victory for a disastrous retreat. If the Archduke John had obeyed orders in the campaign of Aspern, Napoleon would have been irretrievably cut off. As it was he suffered a

severe defeat, and narrowly escaped destruction. If the Russians had been fully aware of their success at Eylau, and had advanced after the battle, Napoleon never would have had the opportunity of restoring his affairs by the victory of Friedland. And had Kutusoff been aware that Napoleon had fought the battle of Borodino with only ammunition sufficient for a single day, he never would have suffered him to enter Moscow. In all these cases he owed much to fortune—much to the errors of his antagonists—but much also to his own skill and daring.

It is also true that he owed much of his early and signal success to having had the Austrians for his first and principal opponents. Though brave in the field, they were languid, tardy, and easily thrown into confusion by a flank attack. Their radically defective system—which no experience taught them to abandon—of tying up their ablest generals to a plan of the campaign, all the details of which were arranged by the Aulic Council at Vienna; while Napoleon, even in his earliest commands, acted entirely on his own judgment as the varying exigencies of the war demanded, and disdained to be fettered by any superior authority,—gave him a decisive advantage over his methodical antagonists. While at the same time their extraordinary and incurable slowness of proceeding, which continued unamended to the last year of the war, and the certainty with which they retreated, or laid down their arms the moment their flank was turned or their communications threatened, were exactly fitted to play into the hands of a general unrivalled for the celerity of his movements and the boldness with which he threw himself upon his enemy's rear. The Austrian officers had been trained in the old school of military tactics, when after a few marches and counter-marches, a siege, and a couple of pitched battles, the campaign was considered to be at an

end, and both parties were accustomed, as a matter of course, to retire into winter quarters; and when they regarded themselves as defeated as soon as they were decidedly outnumbered or outmanœuvred; and they had no idea either of the rapidity of movement or the obstinacy of resolve, which were requisite to encounter with effect an adversary like Napoleon. To the very last they always allowed him to surprise them, and conceived him to be at the distance of some days' march, when he was actually close upon them. It became manifest how much he had owed to this peculiar character of his opponents, as soon as he came into collision with the Russian troops in the campaign of Austerlitz, or with the English at Waterloo and in the Peninsula. These soldiers never retreated till their defeat was entire and overwhelming; and when they did retire, it was almost invariably in good order, and without loss of baggage or standards. The battle of Friedland was the only one fought by Napoleon against Russian troops in which he gained many of the proofs and trophies of victory. The campaign of Austerlitz is particularly worth studying with a view to this consideration. Indeed all the wars from 1796 to 1814 show that, had the Austrians been his only antagonists, he would, in all probability, have found no barrier between him and the sceptre of universal dominion.

Nevertheless, after allowing their full weight to all those considerations, ample proof will still remain of the splendid military genius of the French emperor—a genius which never shone forth more brilliantly than in the fatal campaign of 1814, when, with an army composed almost entirely of newly levied conscripts—many of them mere boys—he contended single-handed against the combined forces of all Europe, and gained such a series of astonishing, though ineffective, victories. And whoever may be found, from motives of ungenerous

envy, or unworthy love of paradox, to deny the claims of Napoleon to the praise of a consummate general, the testimony of the Duke of Wellington and the Archduke Charles—the only captains who ever conquered him—will not be wanting to confute them.*

The capacities of Napoleon as a civil ruler were scarcely inferior to his talents as a general. We find ample evidence of the success with which he applied the native vigour of his understanding to the science of government, in his despatches to the ministers of state, in his recorded conversations with his friends, in his speeches and observations to his council, as collected and published by Thibaudeau, and in the admirable measures he adopted or suggested for the reorganisation of France from 1800 to 1804. It is impossible to read the account of these matters which Mr. Alison has left us†, without doing involuntary homage to the strong clear sense, the instinctive wisdom, which, amid all the fatal errors which ambition led him to commit, marked every observation which fell from this wonderful man. In one point only was he thoroughly ignorant—commercial policy—but so are nine-tenths of statesmen even now. Nor does history alone contain the proofs of Napoleon's extraordinary administrative capacity. All France and Italy abound with the undertakings of public utility which he set on foot and carried through. It appears that during the twelve years of his government he expended no less than 40,000,000*l.* sterling on public works in the various countries under his rule (twenty-eight millions in France alone); and of these,

* The Duke, on being asked by Canning at what period of his career he considered that Napoleon was most conspicuously great as a military chief, replied, "Oh! beyond all question, after the battle of Leipsic."

† We especially recommend to the careful study of our readers the thirty-fifth chapter of Mr. Alison's work.

twenty-two were for roads, bridges, harbours, and canals, which will remain eternal monuments of his genius and power, and perpetual blessings and sources of civilisation to all Europe, long after the hand of time and industry shall have obliterated the last lingering traces of his desolating wars, and when the memory of his crimes and his glory shall have faded into the dim remoteness of the past. It is not often the case that the good men do lives after them, and the evil is interred with their bones; but it was so to a great extent with Napoleon. The vestiges of the mischiefs which he caused, and the sufferings which he inflicted, are fast dying out, and the lifetime of the present generation will probably see the last of them effaced; but the Antwerp harbour, the Alpine roads, and the Code Napoleon, would, in all likelihood, survive his memory, if they were not themselves its noble and undying record.

The physical energies of Napoleon seem to have been almost superhuman. Fatigue was nearly unknown to him. With most men such an unsleeping spirit as his would have "o'er informed its tenement of clay." The fiery activity of his soul, however, appeared to endow his corporeal frame with powers of endurance and exertion with which none of his followers could keep pace. Mr. Alison, in his seventieth chapter, has given us a vivid picture of the incessant toil with which he wore out both his aides-de-camp and his secretaries. He was invariably temperate, often almost to asceticism; seldom took above four hours' sleep, and, when necessary, seemed able to dispense with it altogether.

"But while he shunn'd the grosser joys of sense,
His mind seem'd nourish'd by that abstinence."

In one point his character presents a singular contrast with itself. His genius was essentially mathematical; yet few men ever existed in whom the poetic

clement was so powerfully developed. His fancy was quite of the oriental cast. To the very end of his career his mind was full of the most romantic visions of Eastern grandeur ; and his magnificent and wild imagination presents a vivid contrast to the vigorous grasp of his intellect, the coolness of his judgment, and the crystal clearness of his understanding. The throne of Constantinople or Hindostan was one of the dreams of his earliest youth ; and even in the midst of his most splendid European conquests, gorgeous visions of palms and pagodas were seldom long absent from his fancy.

The reverse of this interesting picture is presented when we turn from his intellectual endowments to contemplate his moral qualities. Yet even here there was much that was attractive. He was a man of fascinating manners, of occasional impulses of generous emotion, and of warm and kind, though limited affections. He appears to have been sincerely attached to his wife and child, and to a few among his early companions in arms, especially to Lannes, Duroc, and Junot. But the prominent feature of his character was a hard, cold, unrelenting selfishness. Whatever interfered, or seemed likely to interfere, with his own fame, his own aggrandisement, his own ambition, was trampled under foot with the most ruthless resolution. His total and contemptible disregard of truth ; his ungenerous enmity to all whose exploits threatened to rival or eclipse his own, or whose services to himself had been too conspicuously brilliant ; his entire disregard of the lives of his soldiers, or the exhaustion of his country, or the rights of other sovereigns, or his own deliberate promises and solemn treaties, or, in short, of any consideration whatever, when in pursuit of the objects he had determined to obtain ; his insolent and cruel violations of the first principles of international law ; and the sufferings he inflicted on the whole of Europe by his Berlin and Milan

anti-commercial decrees, while at the same time he did not scruple to sacrifice the very object for which they were enacted, by the sale of licences to enrich his private treasury ; all these things, which are fully and vividly detailed in the history before us, not only make us rejoice in the fall of this barbarian enemy of peace and freedom, but enable us to look upon the retributive fate which subsequently overtook him—bitter as it was—without a single emotion of pity or regret.

The insatiable and unresting ambition of Napoleon admits of no excuse. His encroachments were even more daring and intolerable in time of peace than during war. He pursued them from passion, and justified them on principle. He was in the habit of defending his unceasing wars, by urging the necessity, which the precarious tenure of his dynasty laid him under, of constantly dazzling the imaginations of the French by new and more magnificent achievements ; and repeatedly affirmed that any repose under his laurels, any pause in his career of conquest, would have compromised his authority with so fickle and requiring a people. Mr. Alison, much to our surprise, adopts the same line of defence.

“Napoleon constantly affirmed that he was not to be accused for the wars which he undertook ; that they were imposed upon him by an invincible necessity ; that glory and success—in other words, perpetual conquest—were the conditions of his tenure of power ; that he was the head of a military republic, which would admit of no pause in its career ; that conquest with him was essential to existence, and that the first pause in the march of victory would prove the commencement of ruin. This history has, indeed, been written to little purpose, if it is not manifest, even to the most inconsiderate, that he was right in these ideas, and that it was not himself, but the spirit of his age, which is chargeable with his fall.”—Vol. x. p. 539.

But the defence is an untenable one ; or, if admissible at all, is applicable only to his earlier wars. It is un-

questionably true, as Napoleon declared, that his power being founded mainly on opinion, any serious *check*, or *reverse*, might have shaken—and when it came *did* shake—the stability of his throne. But this stability was so far from depending on his continental aggression wars, that it was materially weakened and undermined by them ; and the grinding conscription—which in the late years of the war was always levied by anticipation—had wearied out the loyalty of the great body of the nation, and the fatigues and privations of ceaseless campaigning had completely exhausted the zeal and attachment of his generals, before the disasters in Spain or Russia had begun to cast a doubt on the invincibility of his arms.* “Where is the use,” asked the discontented marshals, “of our wealth and our splendid palaces in Paris, if we are never to have leisure to enjoy them, but must live on horseflesh, and lie upon the ground ?” We feel perfectly satisfied, after a careful perusal of all that Mr. Alison has written on this subject, that if, after the decisive battle of Friedland, Napoleon had sheathed the sword, and devoted his genius and activity to internal improvement, and to the reparation of the ravages which his wars had made in the wealth, the finances, the commerce, the population, and the agriculture of France, he might still have been reigning in the Tuileries, and have maintained the boundary of the Rhine.

To us—who live after the panic has subsided, and when the cause of terror is removed, and who can read past events by the light which subsequent disclosures have thrown over them—few things appear more remarkable than the excessive alarm and despondency which Napoleon's march towards universal dominion excited in the minds even of the most strong and clear-sighted statesmen of the day. They saw him advance from victory to victory,—lay prostrate often by a single

* Alison, vol. viii. pp. 614. 674.

blow the most renowned monarchies of Europe, attach one nation after another to his standards, and aggrandise his territories even more rapidly by diplomacy than by the sword. But they did *not* see, behind this brilliant exterior of events, the causes at work, which sooner or later must inevitably arrest the tide of conquest, and roll it back with resistless violence upon the shores of France. They did not see that the utter exhaustion, both of population, commerce, and cultivation which Napoleon's conquests involved, must soon bring those conquests to an end, by leaving him destitute of those natural resources which had hitherto enabled him to achieve them. They did not perceive that the enormous armies which were requisite to crush his more powerful antagonists must, in a hostile land, fall to pieces from their own unwieldiness; and still more that the cruel exactions and more cruel humiliations which he heaped upon the vanquished nations, were silently, but rapidly, arousing a desperate spirit of resistance and revenge, which, when matured, would prove too mighty even for the spirit of conquest, or the miracles of military science. In modern times, we are satisfied, universal dominion is as hopeless a chimera as perpetual motion. The very mechanism requisite to realise either problem involves its own discomfiture. Yet the correspondence of Sir James Mackintosh (who assuredly was one of the most sagacious and profound observers of political events which our age has produced) abounds in desponding passages as to the universal despotism which the French emperor was establishing, and the night of barbarism which was falling upon Europe. In 1808 he writes thus to a friend:—"Who can tell how long the fearful night may be, before the dawn of a brighter to-morrow? Experience may, and I hope does, justify us in expecting that the whole course of human

affairs is towards a better state ; but it does not justify us in supposing that many steps of the progress may not immediately be towards a worse. The race of man may reach the promised land, but there is no assurance that the present generation will not perish in the wilderness. The prospect of the nearest part of futurity, of all that we can discover, except with the eyes of speculation, seems very dismal. The mere establishment of absolute power in France is the smallest part of the evil. . . . Europe is now covered with a multitude of dependent despots, whose existence depends on their maintaining the paramount tyranny in France. The mischief has become too intricate to be unravelled in our day. An evil greater than despotism, or rather the worst and most hideous form of despotism, approaches—a monarchy, literally universal, seems about to be established. Then all the spirit, variety, and emulation of separate nations, which the worst forms of internal government have not utterly extinguished, will vanish. And in that state of things, if we may judge from past examples, the whole energy of human intellect and virtue will languish, and can scarcely be revived otherwise than by a spirit of barbarism.”*

Yet within five years of the date of these remarks, the empire of Napoleon was at an end.

But it is time to bring our observations to a close. We lay down Mr. Alison's masterly picture of Napoleon's career and character, with a feeling of sincere regret. To attempt any succinct portraiture of such a man would be presumptuous and idle. It would appear as if Providence had sent him upon earth, to show to the worshippers of grandeur and of talent, how completely all that is most magnificent in intellectual endowment may be divorced from moral excellence and the

* *Memoirs of Sir James Mackintosh*, vol. i. p. 383. See also pp. 296. 307. 375., for a repetition of the same gloomy forebodings.

generous affections; and when so divorced, how incalculably sad and terrible are its consequences to mankind. Yet every page of Napoleon's history, while it adds to the detestation which we cannot but feel for his selfishness and his crimes, serves also to augment the thrilling admiration which the coldest heart cannot refuse to his superb and splendid genius.

It appears from authentic documents which Mr. Alison has collected, that from the commencement to the close of the revolutionary wars, the levies of soldiers in France exceeded *four millions**, and that not less than *three millions* of these, on the lowest calculation, perished in the field, the hospital, or the bivouac.† If to these we add, as we unquestionably must, at least an equal number out of the ranks of their antagonists, it is clear that not less than *six millions* of human beings perished in warfare in the course of twenty years in the very heart of civilised Europe, at the commencement of the nineteenth century of the Christian era. But even these stupendous numbers give us no adequate conception of the destruction of human life directly consequent on the wars of the revolution and the empire. We must add the thousands who perished from want, outrage, and exposure, and the hundreds of thousands who were subsequently swept away by the ravages of that pestilence‡ which took its rise amid the retreat from Russia, and the crowded garrisons of the campaign of 1813, and for several years afterwards desolated in succession every country of Europe. And even when we have summed up and laid before us, in all the magnitude of figures, the appalling destruction of life here exhibited, we can still gather only a faint and remote conception of the sufferings and the evils inflicted by this awful scourge. Death in the field is among the

* Alison, vol. x. p. 540.

† Ibid. vol. vi. p. 411.

‡ Ibid. vol. ix. p. 650.; vol. x. p. 9.

smallest of the miseries of war; the burned villages—the devastated harvests—the ruined commerce—the towns carried by assault—the feeble outraged, and the lovely massacred—grief, despair, and desolation, carried into innumerable families,—these are among the more terrific visitations of military conflicts, and the blackest of the crimes for which a fearful retribution will one day be exacted at the hands of those who have provoked, originated, or compelled them. If anything could awaken the statesmen of our age to a just estimate of war and the warrior, surely their deeds and the consequences of these deeds should do so, when exhibited on a scale of such tremendous magnitude. Yet so far the impression made seems to have been both feeble and imperfect. Our views with regard to war are still in singular discordance both with our reason and our religion. They appear to be rather the result of a brute instinct, than of obedience to the dictates either of a sound sense, or of a pure faith. On all other points, Christianity is the acknowledged foundation of our theory of morals, however widely we may swerve from it in practice; but in the case of war we do not pretend to keep up even the shadow of allegiance to the authority of our nominal lawgiver. “A state of war,” says Robert Hall, “is nothing less than a temporary repeal of all the principles of virtue.” It is the primary object of war, and is considered to be the primary duty of the warrior, to inflict the maximum of injury upon the enemy; and so distinctly is this principle laid down, that we have seen courts-martial held upon deserving officers, in which the only charge against them was that they had not done as much mischief to their antagonists as, under the circumstances, it was considered they might have done,—that they had spared some property which might have been destroyed, and suffered some fellow creatures to escape with life who, with greater

exertion, might have been slain; and in which the accusation was preferred in these broad and naked terms.*

How happens it that our notions on the subject of war are so widely different from what we have a right to suppose they would be among a Christian people? from what they would be, if Christianity had had any share in their formation? We think the singular discrepancy may be traced to two sources. In the first place, the whole tone of feeling among educated minds—and through them among other classes—has become thoroughly perverted and demoralised by the turn which is given to their early studies. The first books to which the attention of our youth is sedulously and exclusively directed are those of the ancient authors; the first poet they are taught to relish and admire is Homer; the first histories put into their hands (and with which through life they are commonly more conversant than with any other) are those of Greece and Rome; the first biographies with which they become familiar are those of the heroes and warriors of the wild times of old. Now, in those days the staple occupation of life—at once its business and its pastime—was war. War was almost the sole profession of the rich and great, and became, in consequence, almost the sole theme of poets and historians. It is, therefore, the subject most constantly presented, and presented in the most glowing colours, to the mind of the young student, at the precise period when his mind is most susceptible and most tenacious of new impressions; the exciting

* "The morality of peaceful times is directly opposite to the maxims of war. The fundamental rule of the first is to do good; of the latter to inflict injuries. The former commands us to succour the oppressed; the latter to overwhelm the defenceless. The rules of morality will not suffer us to promote the dearest interests by falsehood; the maxims of war applaud it when employed for the destruction of others."—*Robert Hall*, p. 20.

scenes of warfare fill him with deeper interest than any other, and the intellectual and moral qualities of the warrior—quick foresight, rapid combination, iron resolve, stern severity, impetuous courage—become the objects of his warmest admiration; he forgets the peaceful virtues of charity and forbearance, or learns to despise them; he sees not the obscurer but the loftier merits of the philanthropist and the man of science; he comes to look upon war as the noblest of professions, and upon the warrior as the proudest of human characters; and the impression thus early made withstands all the subsequent efforts of reflection and religion to dislodge it. It is difficult to over-estimate the mischief wrought by this early misdirection of our studies; and that the impression produced is such as we have represented it, every one will acknowledge on a consideration of his own feelings.*

The other source of our erroneous sentiments with regard to war may be found in the faulty and mischievous mode in which history has been generally written. In the first place, little except war has been touched upon; and the notion has been thus left upon the mind, either that nations were occupied in war alone, or that nothing else was worth recording. Those silent but steady labours which have gradually advanced the wealth of a country, and laid the foundation of its prosperity and power; those toilsome investigations which have pushed forward the boundaries of human knowledge, and illustrated through all time the age and the land which gave them birth; that persevering ingenuity and unbaffled skill which have made science the handmaid of art, and wrought out of her discoveries the materials of civilisation and national pre-eminence; and, greater than all, that profound and patient thought

* See Foster's *Essays*, p. 241.

which has elicited the great principles of social and political well-being;—concerning all these, history has been silent; and the whole attention, both of the teacher and the student, has been concentrated upon “the loud transactions of the outlying world,” while the real progress of nations, and the great and good men who have contributed thereto, have alike been consigned to oblivion.

Again,—historians have never given a full and fair analysis of *what war is*. They have described the marches, the sieges, the able manœuvres, the ingenious stratagems, the gallant enterprises, the desperate conflicts, the masterly combinations, the acts of heroic daring, with which war abounds;—and they have summed up those descriptions of battles which we read with breathless interest, by informing us that the victory was gained with a loss of so many thousands killed and wounded—so many thousands made prisoners—and so many standards and pieces of artillery taken from the enemy.* But all this is only the outside colouring of war, and goes little way towards making us acquainted with its real character. Historians rarely tell us of the privations suffered—the diseases engendered—the tortures undergone during a campaign;—still less of the vices ripened, the selfishness confirmed, the hearts hardened, by this “temporary repeal of all the principles of virtue.” They do not speak of the ties broken—of the peasants ruined—of the hearths made desolate—of

* “A history that should present a perfect display of human miseries and slaughter, would incite no one that had not attained the last possibility of depravation, to imitate the principal actors. It would give the same feeling as the *sight* of a field of dead and dying men after a battle is over, a sight at which the soul would shudder; yet the tendency of the Homeric poetry, and of epic poetry in general, is to insinuate the glory of repeating such a tragedy.”—*Foster*, p. 343.

grief never to be comforted—of shame never to be wiped away—of the burden of abiding affliction brought upon many a happy household—of all the nameless atrocities, *one* of which in peaceful times would make our blood run cold, but which in war are committed daily, by thousands, with impunity. Historians rarely ever present us with such pictures as the following; and yet these are the inevitable accompaniments of war:—

* Such was the terrible battle of Eylau, fought in the depth of winter, amidst ice and snow, under circumstances of unexampled horror. The loss on both sides was immense; and never in modern times had a field of battle been strewn with such a multitude of slain. On the side of the Russians, 25,000 had fallen, of whom above 7000 were already no more; on that of the French upwards of 30,000 were killed or wounded, and nearly 10,000 had left their colours under pretence of attending to the wounded. Never was spectacle so dreadful as the field presented on the following morning. Above 50,000 men lay in the space of two leagues, weltering in blood. The wounds were for the most part of the severest kind, from the extraordinary quantity of cannon balls which had been discharged during the action, and the close proximity of the contending masses to the deadly batteries which spread their grape at half musket shot through their ranks. Though stretched on the cold snow, and exposed to the severity of an arctic winter, they were burning with thirst, and piteous cries were heard on all sides for water, or assistance to extricate the wounded men from the heaps of slain, or the load of horses, by which they were crushed. Six thousand of these noble animals encumbered the field, or, maddened with pain, were shrieking aloud amid the stifled groans of the wounded.—*Alison*, vi. p. 85.*

* - On Sunday forenoon I found a crowd collected round a car in which some wounded soldiers had just returned from Russia. No grenade, or grape could have so disfigured these victims of the cold. One of them had lost the upper joints of all his ten fingers, and he showed us the stumps. Another wanted both ears and nose. More horrible still was the look of a third, whose eyes had been frozen; the eyelids hung down rotting, the globes of the eyes were burst, and protruded from their sockets. It was awfully hideous; but a spec-

We might multiply pictures yet more fearful, and we give one or two in a note. But we cannot refrain from quoting a few passages from a letter of Sir Charles Bell to Francis Horner, written after the battle of Waterloo, whither he had gone to assist in giving the necessary surgical attendance to the wounded. "After I had been *five days* engaged in the prosecution of my object, I found that the best cases, that is the most horrid wounds, left totally without assistance, were to be found in the French hospital; this hospital was only forming; they were *even then* bringing these poor creatures in from the

tacle yet more dreadful was to present itself. Out of the straw in the bottom of a car, I now beheld a figure creep painfully which one could scarcely believe to be a human being, so wild and distorted were the features; the lips were rotted away, the teeth stood exposed: he pulled the cloth from before his mouth, and grinned on us like a death's head. . . ."—*Alison*, vol. ix. p. 112.

The following is a description of the state of the town and garrison of Dresden in 1813:—"The ravages which a contagious fever (the consequence of their privations) made on the inhabitants, added to the public distress. Not less than three hundred were carried off by it a week, among the citizens alone. Two hundred dead bodies were every day brought out of the military hospitals. Such was the accumulation in the churchyards, that the gravediggers could not inter them, and they were laid naked, in ghastly rows, along the place of sepulture. The bodies were heaped in such numbers on the dead carts, that they frequently fell from them, and the wheels gave a frightful sound in cracking the bones of the bodies which thus lay upon the streets. The hospital attendants and carters trampled down the corpses in the carts, like baggage or straw, to make room for more; and not unfrequently some of the bodies gave signs of life, and even uttered shrieks under this harsh usage. Several bodies thrown into the Elbe for dead, were revived by the sudden immersion in cold water, and the wretches were seen struggling in vain in the waves, by which they were soon swallowed up. Medicine and hospital stores there were none: and almost all the surgeons and apothecaries were dead."—*Alison*, vol. ix. p. 643.

These are ghastly pictures, but we must not shrink from them if we would conceive aright what military glory really is, and how alone it can be purchased.

woods. It is impossible to convey to you the picture of human misery continually before my eyes. What was heart-rending in the day was intolerable at night. . . . At six o'clock I took the knife in my hand, and continued incessantly at work till seven in the evening; and so the second day, and again the third. All the decencies of performing surgical operations were soon neglected; while I amputated one man's thigh, there lay at one time *thirteen*, all beseeching to be taken next. It was a strange thing to feel my clothes stiff with blood, and my arms powerless with using the knife; and more extraordinary still to find my mind calm amidst such a variety of suffering. . . . After being eight days among the wounded (operating, it must be remembered, all the time) I visited the field of battle. The view of the field, the gallant stories, the individual instances of enterprise and valour, recalled me to the sense which the world has of victory and Waterloo. But this was transient; a gloomy, uncomfortable view of human nature is the inevitable consequence of looking upon the whole as I did—as I was forced to do. There must ever be associated with the honours of Waterloo, to my eyes the most shocking sights of woe; to my ears accents of entreaty, outcry from the manly breast, interrupted forcible expressions of the dying, and *noisome smells*.*

When a statesman declares war in consequence of any of the ordinary motives thereto; for the sake of a rich colony which he is desirous to obtain; to prevent an ambitious neighbour from acquiring what might render him a formidable rival; to restore a monarch dethroned by a people wearied of his manifold oppressions; to resent a private wrong, or avenge a diplomatic insult—his thoughts on the matter seldom travel

* Memoirs of Francis Horner, vol. ii. p. 267.

beyond the issuing of a manifesto, the appointment of a general, the levying of troops, and the imposition of taxes for the maintenance of the contest. He is therefore wholly unconscious *what in reality he is doing*;—and if a sage were to go to him, as Nathan went to David, and say—“Sir, you have given orders for the commission of murder on a monstrous scale; you have directed that 50,000 of your subjects shall send as many of their fellow men, wholly unprepared for so awful a change, into a Presence where they must answer for their manifold misdeeds; you have commanded that 30,000 more shall pass the best years of their life in hopeless imprisonment—shall in fact be punished as the worst of criminals, when they have committed no crime but by your orders; you have arranged so that 20,000 more shall lie for days on the bare ground, horribly mutilated, and slowly bleeding to death, and at length only be succoured in order to undergo the most painful operations, and then perish miserably in a hospital; you have given orders that numbers of innocent and lovely women—as beautiful and delicate as your own daughters—shall undergo the last indignities from the licence of a brutal soldiery; you have issued a fiat which, if not recalled, will carry mourning into many families, will cut off at a stroke the delight of many eyes, will inflict upon thousands, now virtuous and contented, misery which can know no cure, and desolation which in this world can find no alleviation;”—if such a message as this were conveyed to him—*every word of which would be strictly true*—would he not disown the ghastly image thus held up to him, and exclaim, “Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?” And if statesmen could realise all this before they put their hand to the declaration of hostilities, would they not rather thrust it into the flames?

We are aware that to many all this will appear idle

and declamatory—wholly unworthy of men who pretend to an acquaintance with political and social science; yet nothing can be more unquestionable than that we have added no unreal touches, no undue colouring to the picture; and our remarks should be thought worthy of the more attention, because we do not belong to those who consider that under *no* circumstances can war be righteously undertaken. On the contrary, few can read its details with more thrilling interest, few would share in its hardships and its perils with heartier zeal, in a cause clear enough and grand enough to justify and hallow the adoption of so terrible an agency; but we know that such causes are infinitely rare; that judging from the past history of our race, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, war is a folly and a crime; and, that where it is so, it is the saddest and the wildest of all follies, and the most heinous of all crimes.*

* “We should do well to translate this word *war* into language more intelligible to us. When we pay our army and navy estimates, let us set down—so much for killing—so much for maiming—so much for making widows and orphans—so much for bringing famine upon a district—so much for corrupting citizens and subjects into spies and traitors—so much for letting loose the demons of fury, rapine, and lust, within the fold of civilised society. We shall know by this means what we have paid our money for; whether we have made a good bargain; and whether the account is likely to pass—elsewhere. We must take in, too, all those concomitant circumstances which make war, considered as battle, the least part of itself—*pars minima sui*. We must fix our eyes, not on the hero returning with conquest, nor yet on the gallant officer dying in the bed of honour—the subject of picture and of song,—but on the private soldier, forced into the service, exhausted by camp sickness and fatigue; pale, emaciated, crawling to a hospital, with the prospect of life—perhaps a long life—blasted, useless, and suffering. We must think of the uncounted tears of her who weeps alone, because the only being who shared her sentiments is taken from her;—no martial music sounds in unison with her feelings;—the long day passes, and he returns not. She does not shed her sorrows over his grave, for she has never learned whether he even had one.

Has it ever occurred to any of our readers to *analyse* the profession of a soldier?—a profession so much honoured in our country, as in most others. A soldier is a man whose profession it is to make war—to fight with his fellow-men, and (disguise it how we will, in the smooth, conventional hypocrisies of language) to slay them. Like every one else, he takes a pride and a pleasure in the exercise of his profession. To rust away in idleness is irksome and inglorious; in peace he has little chance of employment, promotion, or distinction; peace, therefore, is burdensome and unwelcome. From the very nature of things, he longs for war; he watches with a natural, but certainly not a Christian, delight the first bickerings which give promise of ripening into actual hostility, and he desires to “fan the smoking flax into a flame.” This is natural and inevitable; it cannot be otherwise. In most of the nations of modern Europe we have created and maintain an esteemed and influential profession, numbering hundreds of thousands of members, whose interest and inclination both point towards war, and who thus constitute an always acting force, urging their countrymen (however unconsciously) to that which, when fairly stated, no one can defend—to be active in aggression, tenacious in dispute, prompt in reprisals, and sensitive to insult. A soldier is a man who, by the inevitable instinct of his profession, incessantly desires and seeks for a state of things which Christianity denounces as sinful, and which reason condemns as noxious and absurd.

Again, that the destruction of the life and property of

If he had returned, his exertions would not have been remembered individually, for he only made a small, imperceptible part of a human machine called a regiment. These are not fancy pictures; if you please to heighten them, you can every one of you do it for yourselves.”—*Sins of Government the Sins of the Nation*, p. 400.

our fellow-men is a sin, and a grievous sin, *per se*, there can be no question. The position of a soldier imposes upon him the obligation of committing this enormous iniquity to any extent, and upon any parties, at the command of the minister of the day. History tells him—and his own experience will confirm the teaching—that this minister is often wicked, incapable, and passionate; that he has frequently obtained his power by the vilest means (by mistresses in France, by corrupt parliamentary majorities in England); that, in the views which he takes and the orders which he issues, he is often governed by the basest motives, and the silliest and wickedest counsellors. He may be a shallow and sensual intriguer, like Godoy; he may be a man of insatiable ambition, like Napoleon; he may be an empty chatterer, like Newcastle; but however unjust the war which he commands, however wild the scheme, however barefaced the aggression, however innocent the victim, however harsh and barbarous the mode in which the enterprise is to be carried through—the soldier has no choice, no power of refusal or evasion; he has bound himself to do the bidding of his superior, however palpably and monstrously iniquitous that bidding may be. He cannot resign: that would be attended with dishonour. He cannot remonstrate: that would be punished as insubordination. In some of the most important actions of life he has ceased to be a free agent, *though he cannot cease to be a responsible one*; he has parted with his birthright for a mess of pottage: he has, in fact, sold himself into a species of slavery, which often leaves him only the humiliating and torturing alternative of remaining at his post to perpetrate sin and cruelty, or leaving it with dishonour and ruin. And to us it is marvellously strange, and a signal proof of the difficulty and the rarity with which men rise to the contemplation

of first principles, that any one of sound judgment and good feelings, who can dig, or plough, or weave, or push his fortune in any of the thousand paths which lie open to the foot of enterprise, should be willing thus to barter away, for so paltry an equivalent, *his right of refusing to do wrong.*

With this digression — if remarks can be so called which so inevitably grow out of the subject we have been considering — we close our imperfect notice of Mr. Alison's interesting work. The period over which it extends is, beyond all others, the most thronged with great events — great in themselves, marvellous in the rapidity with which they succeeded each other, momentous and far reaching in their consequences. No other period could be named so fertile in brilliant pictures for the poet, in suggestions for the speculative philosopher, in lessons of practical wisdom for the statesman. We see the most glorious prospects that ever dawned upon civilised humanity, quenched in the darkest cloud that ever closed over its destinies. We see the overthrow of an ancient tyranny, — intolerable from its intense selfishness, more intolerable still from its very dotage and decrepitude, — and the birth, out of its ashes, of a wild and shapeless liberty, at once violent and feeble, — stained with the ineradicable vice and weakness of its origin, — mischievous and transient, because the virtues of freedom can have no firm root among a people vitiated by long centuries of endured oppression. We see the most prolonged and devastating wars ever waged upon the earth ended by a fearful and a fitting retribution ; and the most magnificent genius of modern times, within the short space of twenty-five years, a famished ensign in an unpaid army, monarch of the most powerful empire which has existed since the days

of Trajan — and, finally, a chained and solitary captive on a barren rock in the remotest pathways of the ocean. In a period thickly strewn with such vicissitudes, there is much food for wholesome contemplation ; and if the nations and the rulers of our times would study its lessons with the solicitous humility which their magnitude and their solemnity demand, we might at length become rich in that wisdom which grows out of the grave of folly — strong in that virtue which springs out of the recoil from sin.

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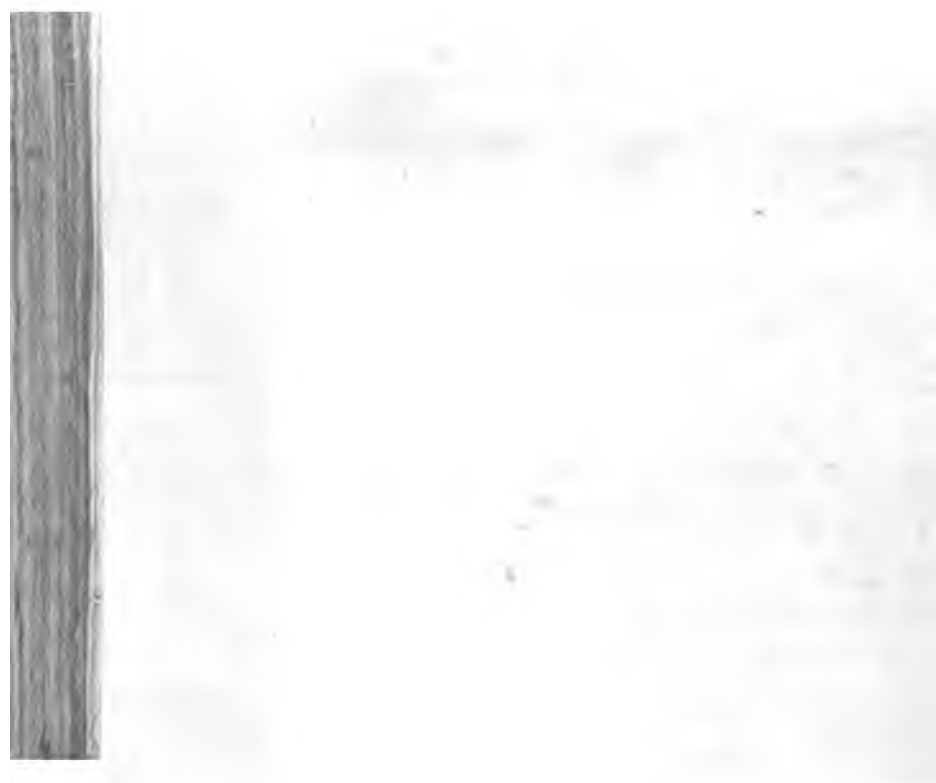
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